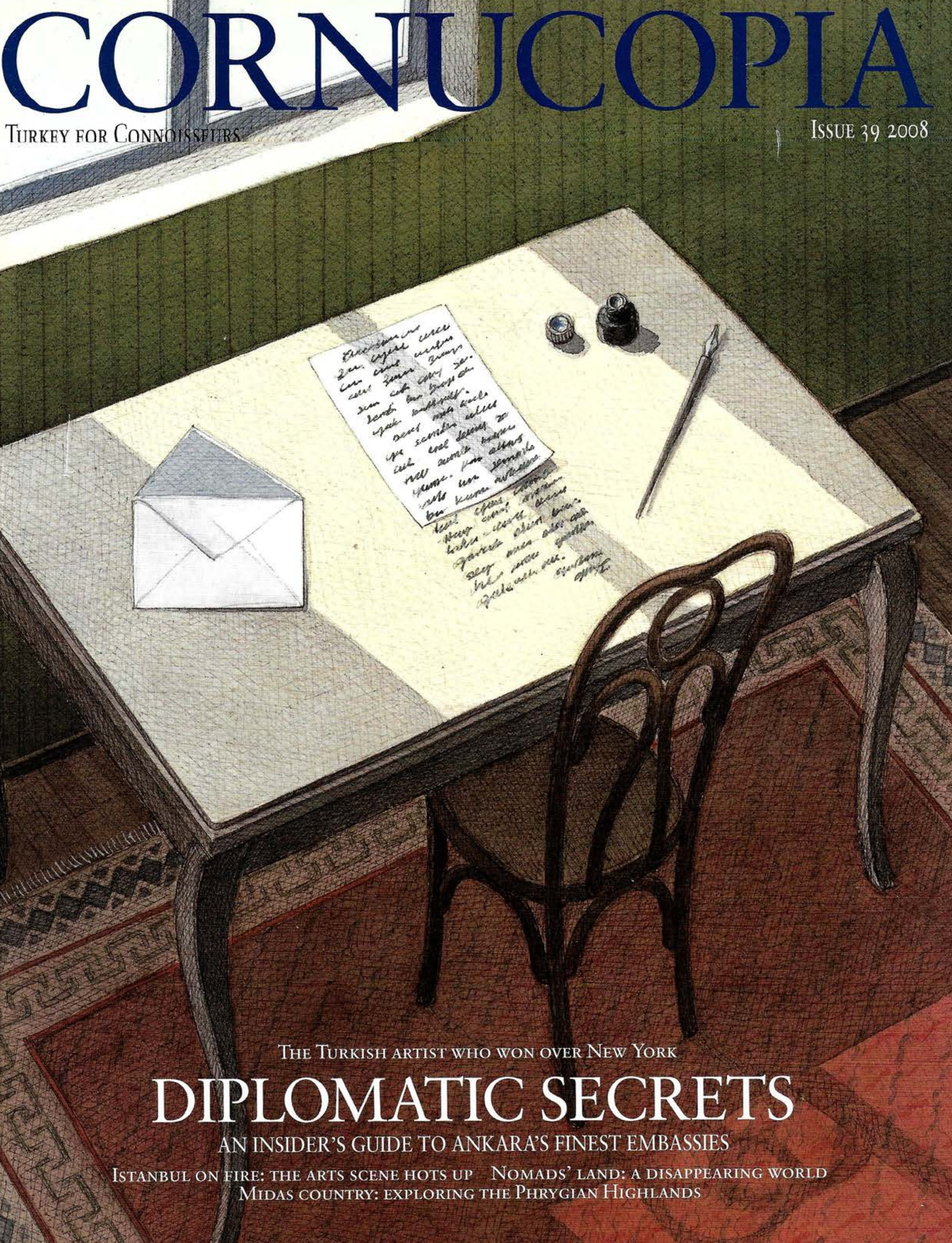
CORNUCOPIA

Turkey for Connoisseurs

Issue 39 2008



The Turkish artist who won over New York

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The Latin *cornu copiæ* or 'horn of plenty', a horn overflowing with flowers, fruit and corn; symbol of prosperity and abundance in the cities of Anatolia.

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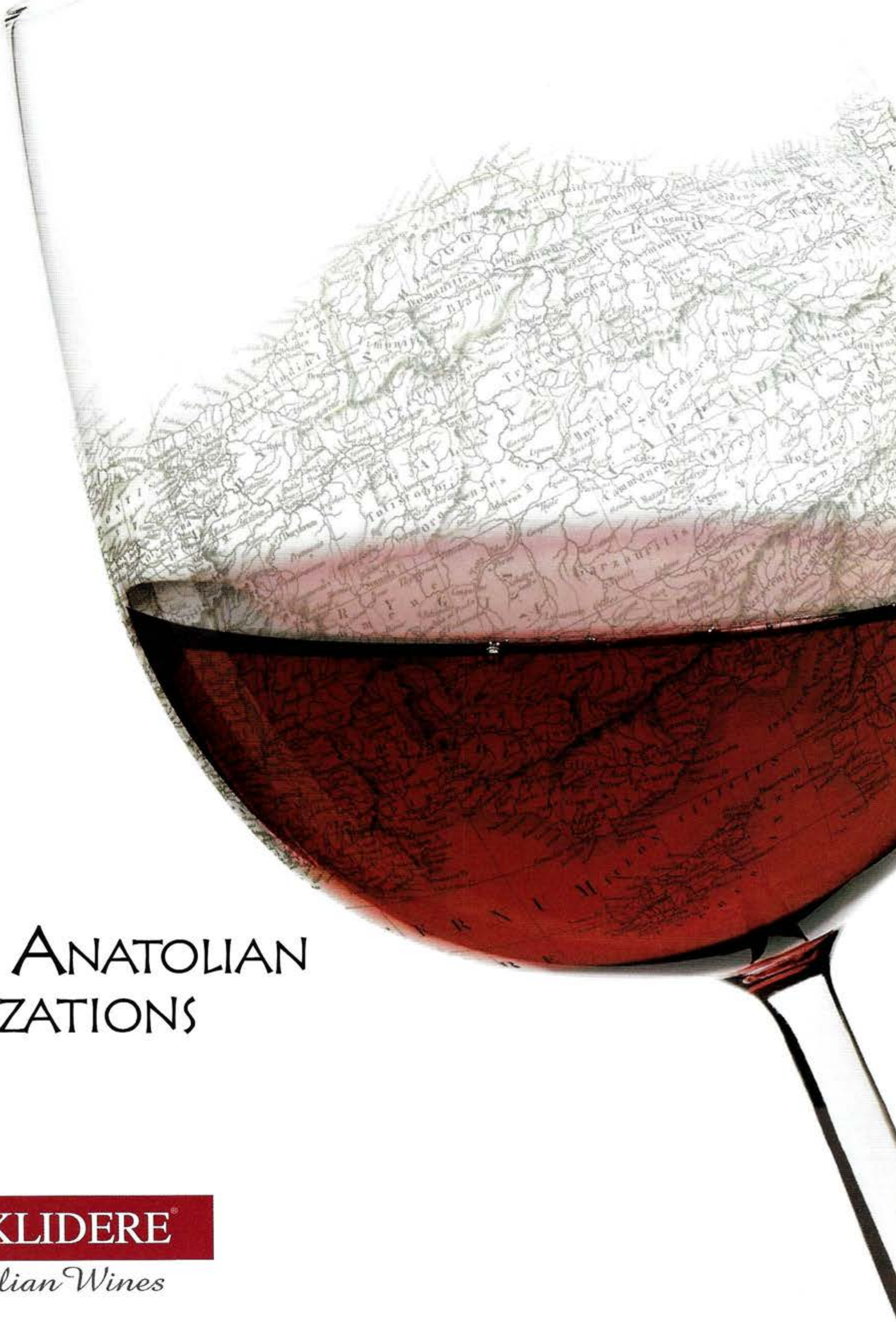
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3 CAPITALS OF ISLAMIC ART
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ISFAHAN
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**İstanbul, Isfahan, Delhi:
Three Capitals of Islamic Art
is an exhibition featuring masterpieces
from the Louvre's Islamic collections.
At the Sakıp Sabancı Museum,
Emirgan, İstanbul,
February 19 - June 1, 2008.
With the support of Türk Telekom**

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This exhibition is organized through the contributions of Les Arts Decoratif and cooperation of SSM and Louvre Museum.

CONNOISSEUR

THE PICK OF EXHIBITIONS AND SALEROOMS AROUND THE WORLD

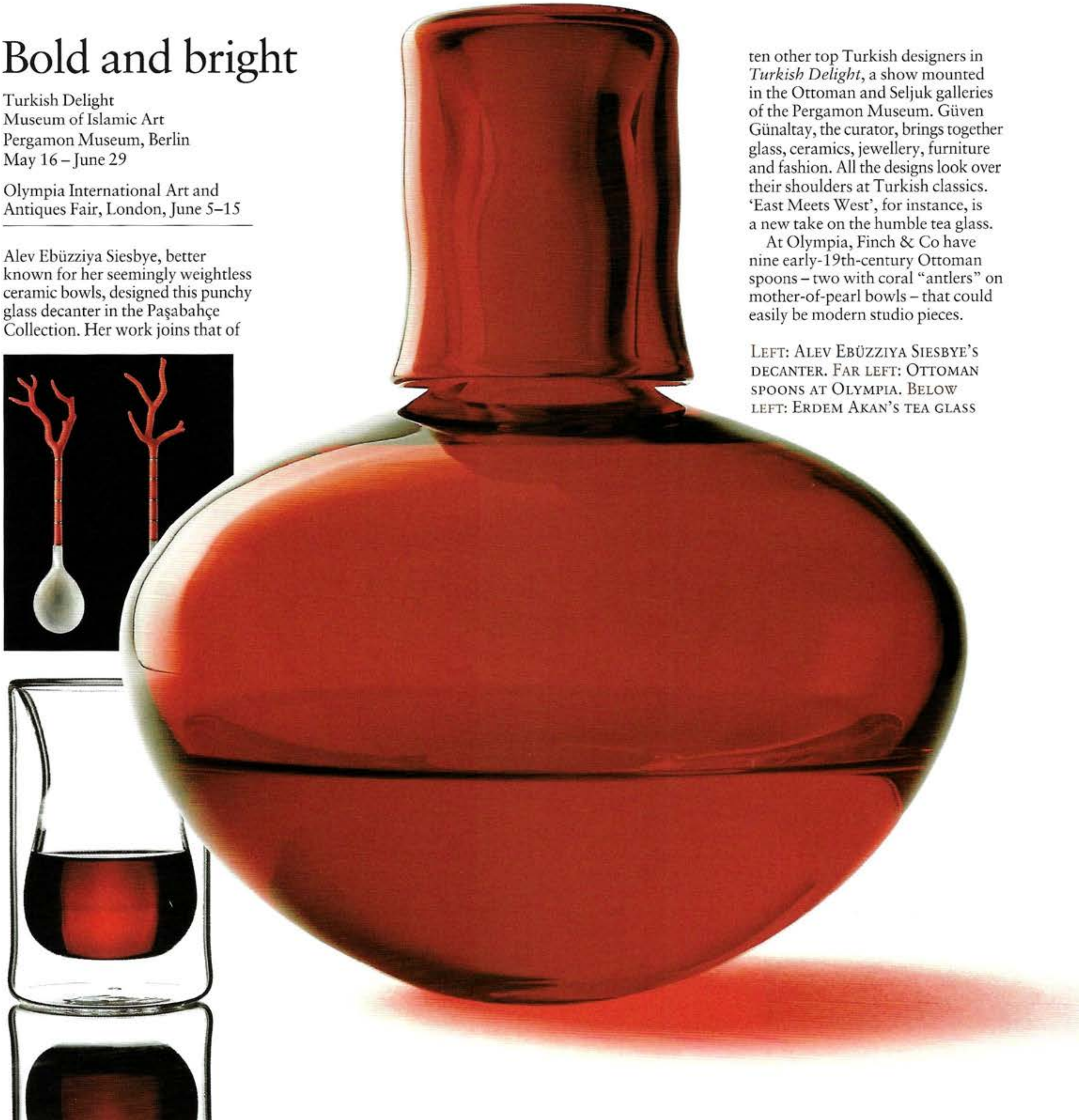
Bold and bright

Turkish Delight
Museum of Islamic Art
Pergamon Museum, Berlin
May 16 – June 29

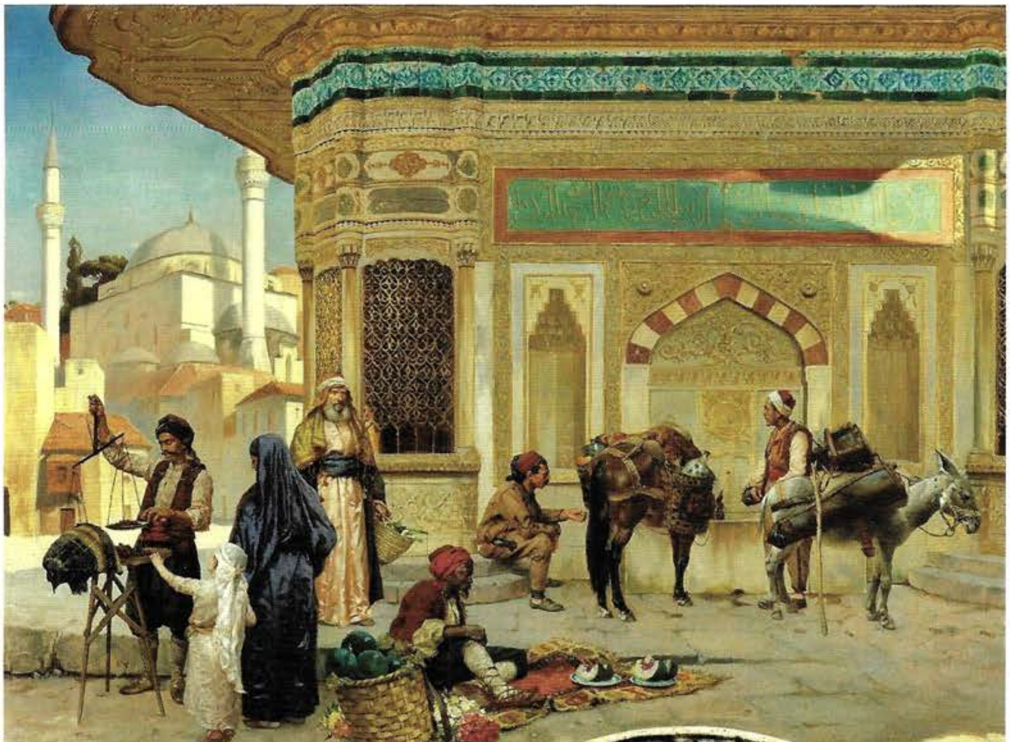
Olympia International Art and
Antiques Fair, London, June 5–15

Alev Ebüzziya Siesbye, better known for her seemingly weightless ceramic bowls, designed this punchy glass decanter in the Paşabahçe Collection. Her work joins that of ten other top Turkish designers in *Turkish Delight*, a show mounted in the Ottoman and Seljuk galleries of the Pergamon Museum. Güven Günaltay, the curator, brings together glass, ceramics, jewellery, furniture and fashion. All the designs look over their shoulders at Turkish classics. 'East Meets West', for instance, is a new take on the humble tea glass.

At Olympia, Finch & Co have nine early-19th-century Ottoman spoons – two with coral "antlers" on mother-of-pearl bowls – that could easily be modern studio pieces.

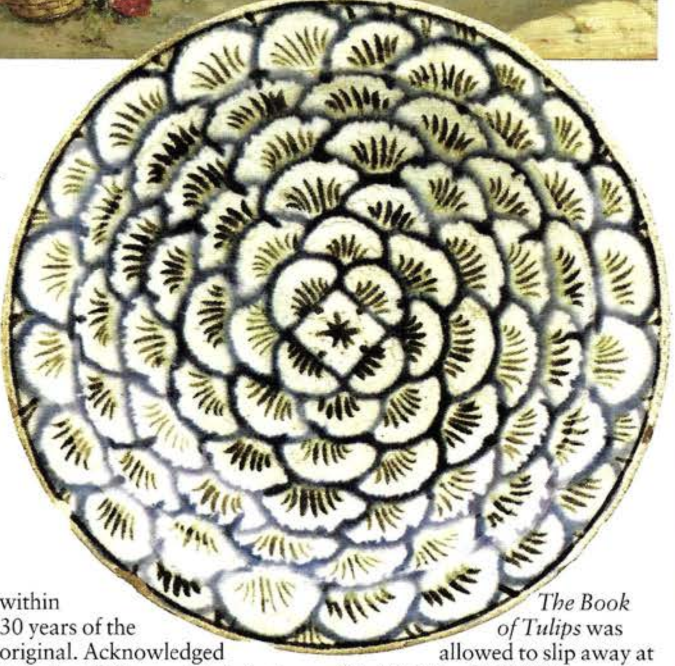


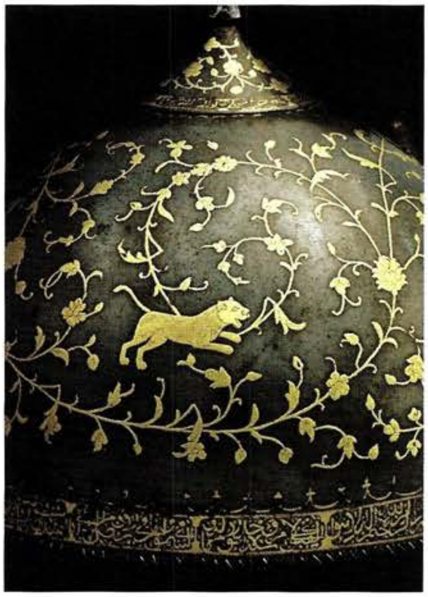
LEFT: ALEV EBÜZZIYA SIESBYE'S DECANTER. FAR LEFT: OTTOMAN SPOONS AT OLYMPIA. BELOW LEFT: ERDEM AKAN'S TEA GLASS



Arts of the Islamic World
Sotheby's, London
October 2007 and April 2008

Many versions exist of Gentile Bellini's portrait of Mehmet the Conqueror. Best known is the 1480 one in London's National Gallery, but it is in a dreadful state, with barely an original brushstroke left. The portrait opposite was painted within 30 years of the original. Acknowledged to be by a follower, it is in fact closer to the real thing, with brushwork consistent with the period. The beauty of the face and sleeve make it a gem no connoisseur with an interest in Turkey's past could resist. More's the pity, then, that Turkish collectors failed to bring it home in October. It fetched £468,500 – peanuts compared to the millions squandered on Orientalists. Not since *The Book of Tulips* was allowed to slip away at Christie's for £100,000 has such a chance been missed.





The star of Sotheby's spring sale was an Abbasid key to the Kaaba, which made £9 million. But there was much beauty besides, notably an 18th-century Safavid steel-and-gold helmet (left), a pair of 19th-century Qajar rose-and-nightingale paintings (right), and a plate with a striking cobalt and green design which, unexpectedly, is 17th-century Iznik (above).

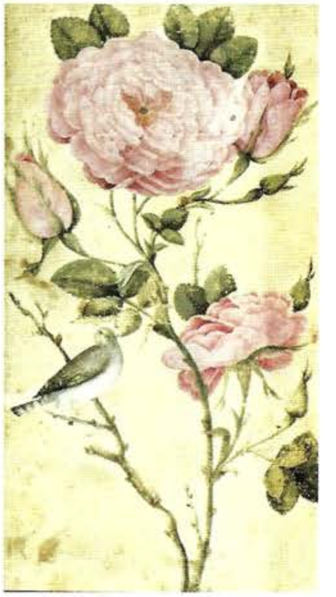
Orientalist Art

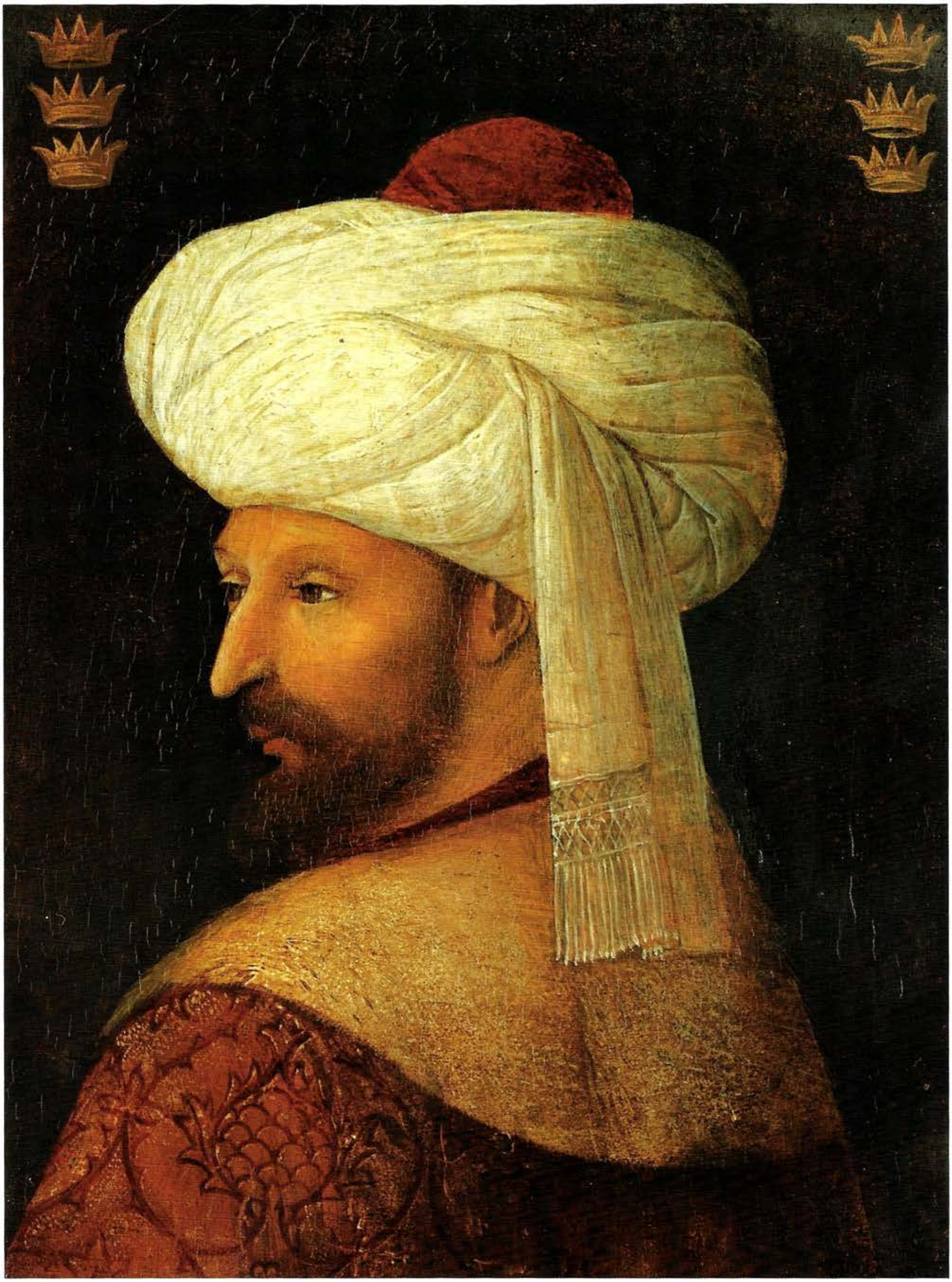
Rudolph Ernst completed 'The Fountain of Ahmet III' (left) in 1892, after returning from Turkey to his Paris studio armed with photographs and sketches. Little known in his lifetime, his work today, like that of so many Orientalists, is on a roll. 'The Fountain' made a cool $1,273,000 at Sotheby's New York in April.

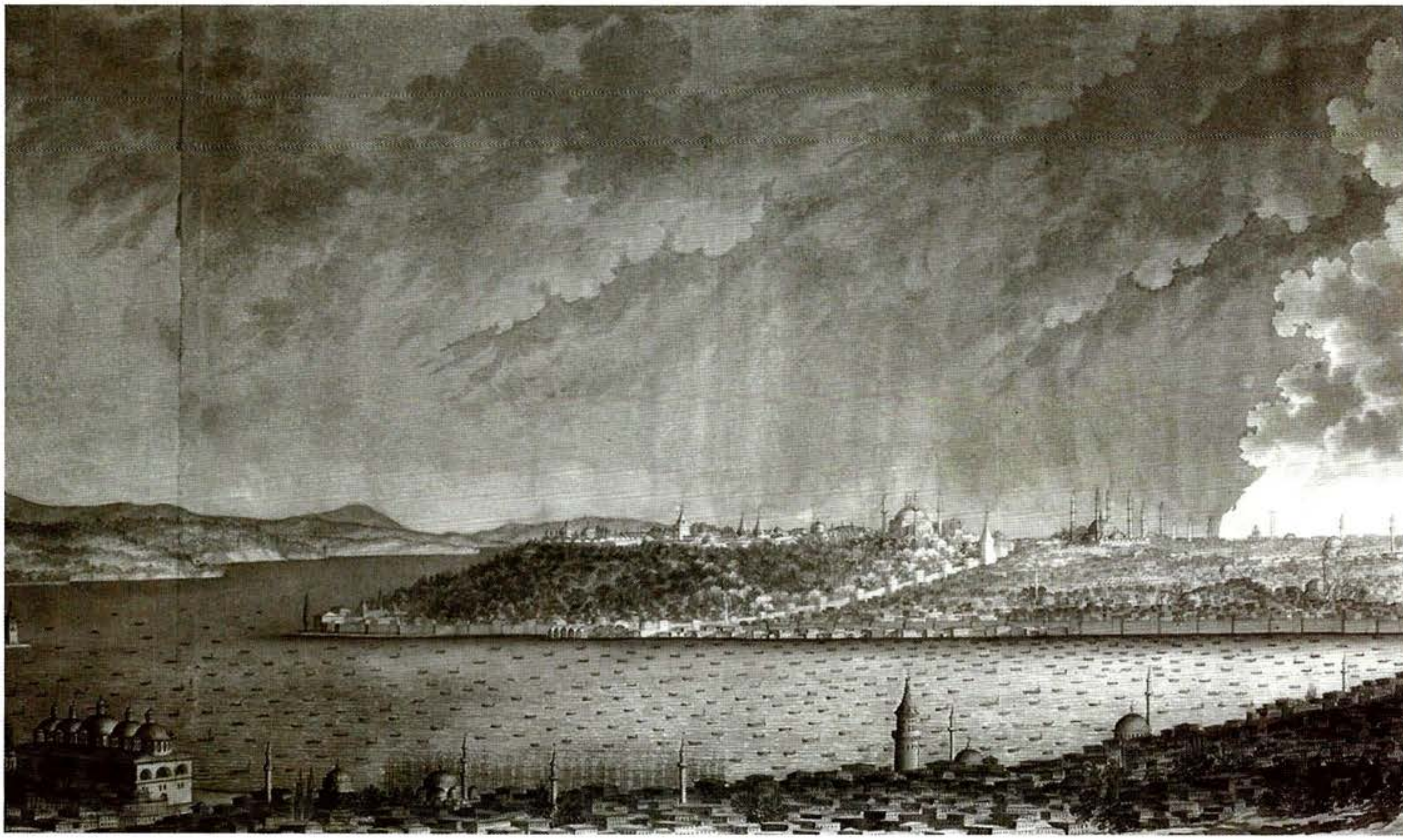
The Lure of the East is a big British Orientalist show at Tate Britain (June 4 – Aug 29). Its next stop after London is Istanbul's Pera Museum (Sep 23 – Jan 4).

Old Masters Sale
Sotheby's, London, July 9, 2008

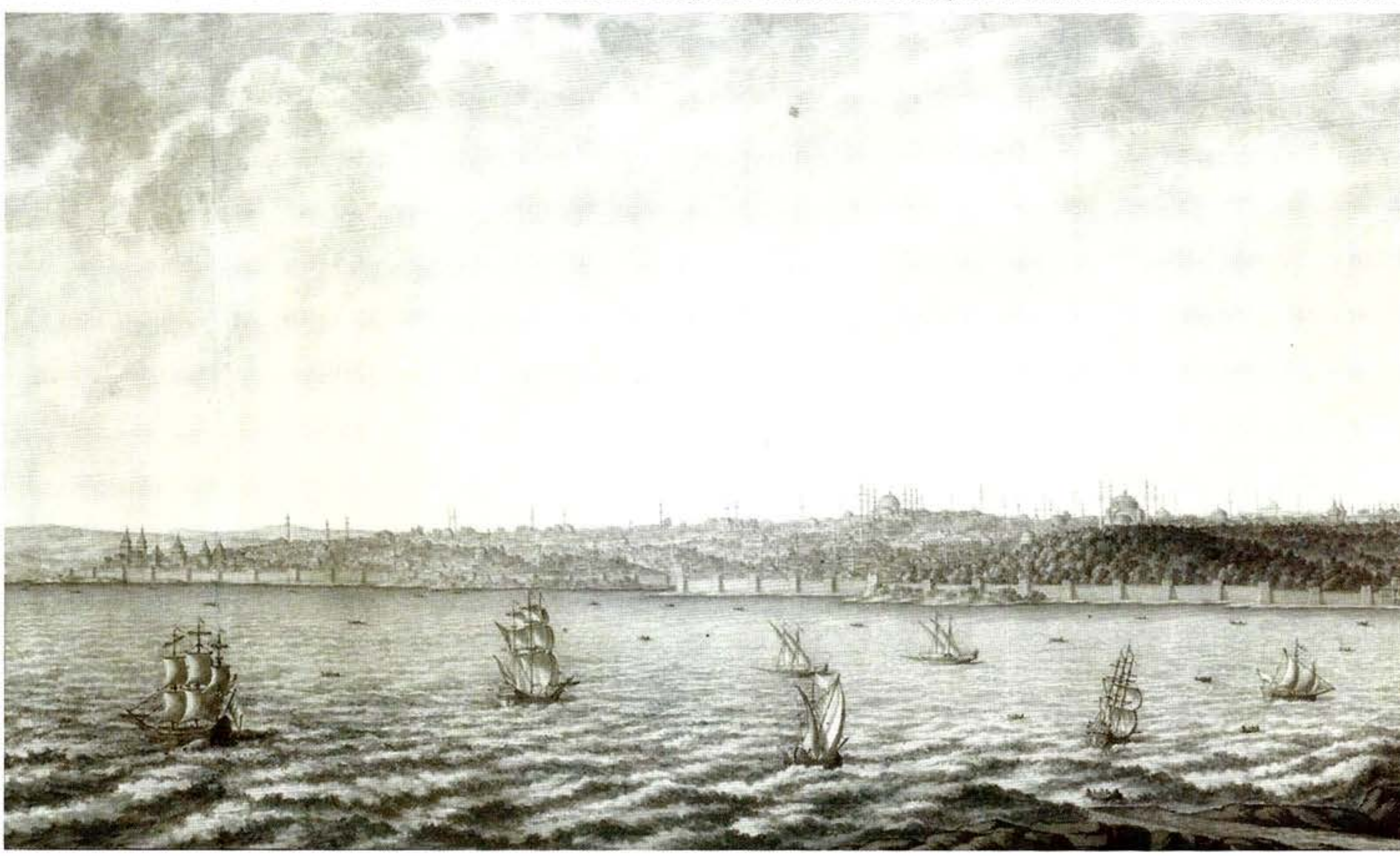
Two Italian panoramas of Istanbul, each almost a metre and half wide (see following pages), come up for auction in July with estimates of £30–£40,000 apiece. In pen and black ink, grey wash and chalk, one is of Istanbul from the Asian shore, the other of a terrible fire that swept the city. The Italian inscription refers to "the fire of May 1755" and "ruin of 18,000 houses". But Caroline Finkel, author of the Ottoman history *Osman's Dream*, suggests it may depict the inferno of July 1756. The fire, she writes, "spread throughout the walled city and raged for 48 hours, reducing 130 theological colleges, 335 mills, 150 mosques and 774,000 houses, 34,200 shops and 36 bathhouses to ashes".

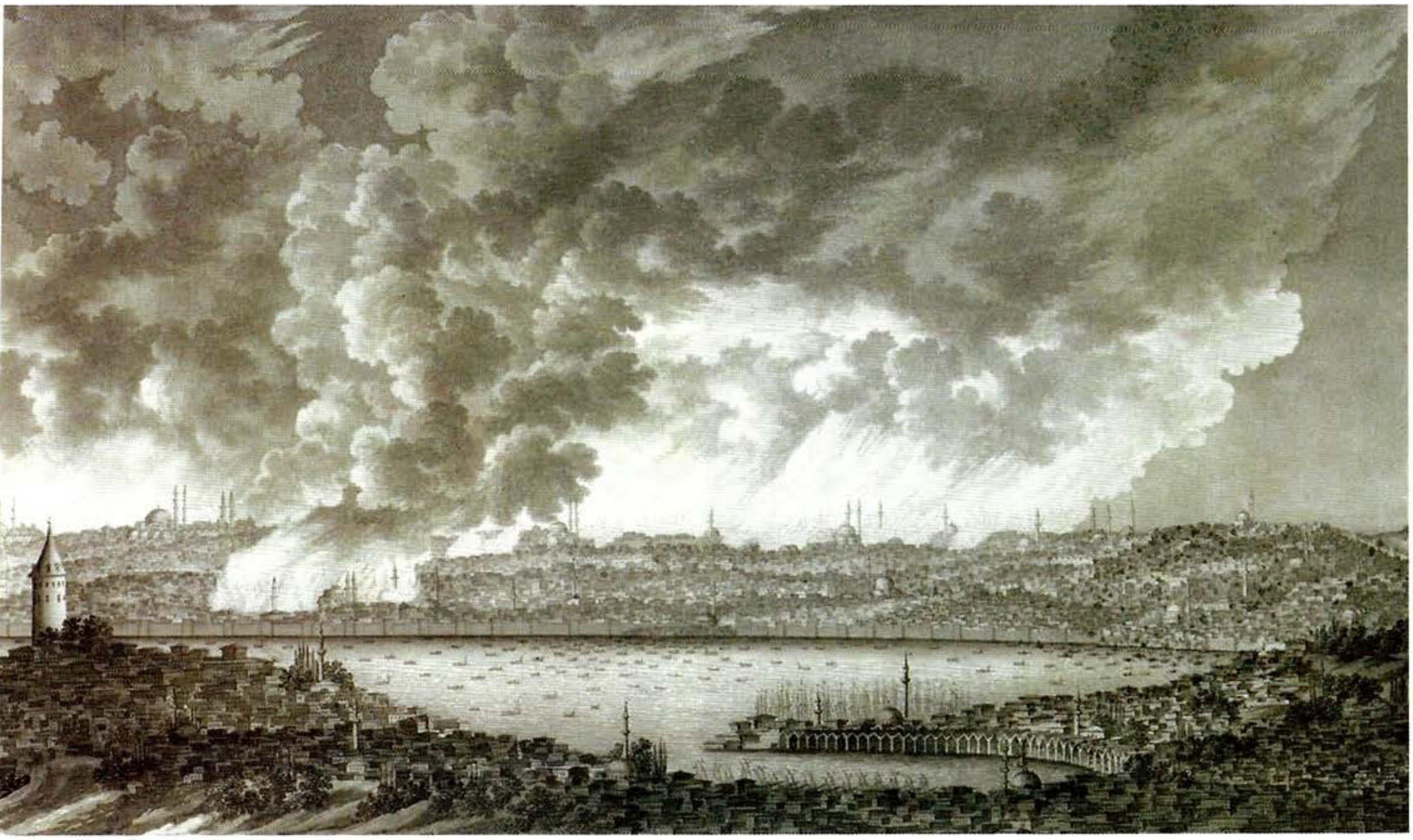




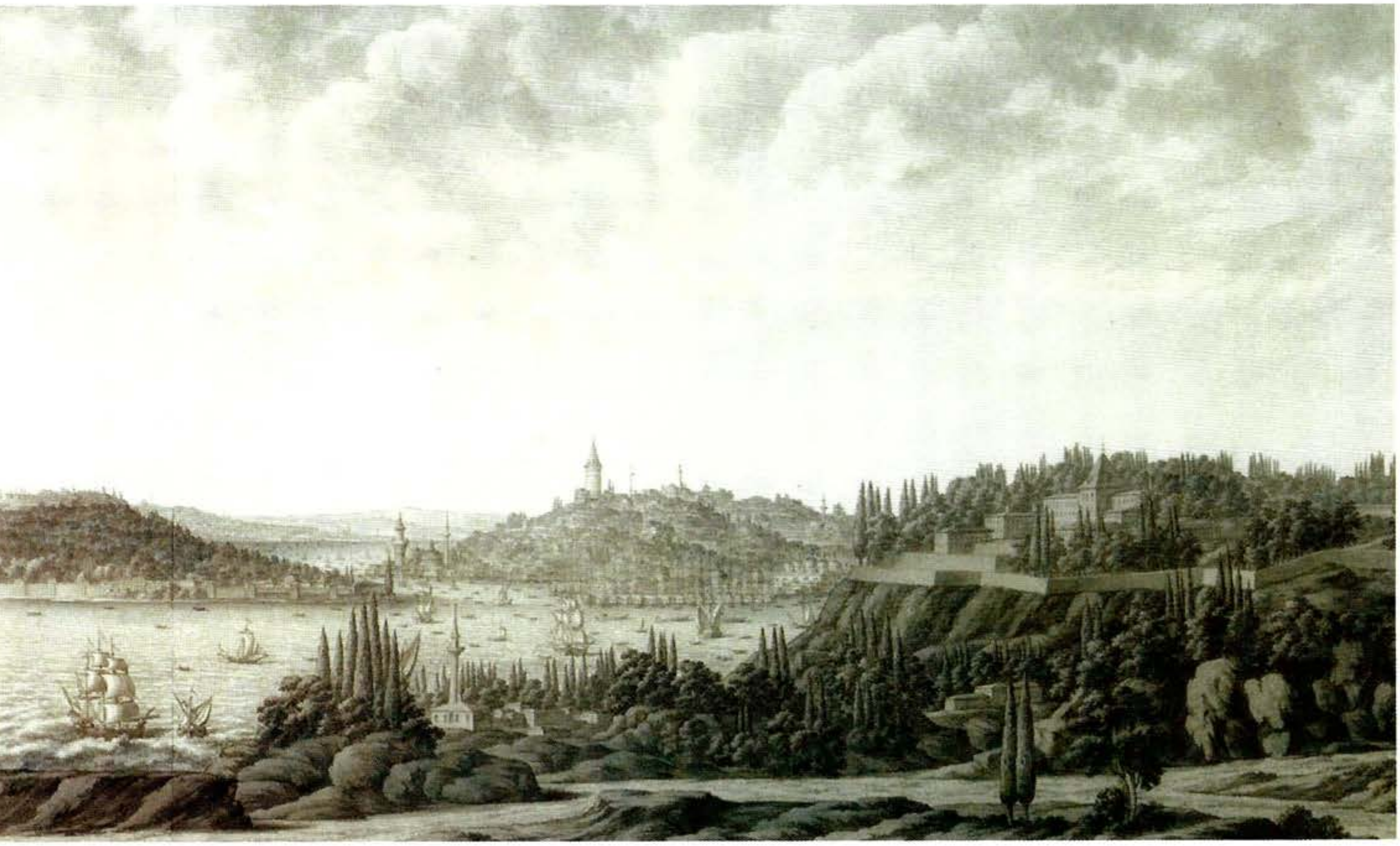


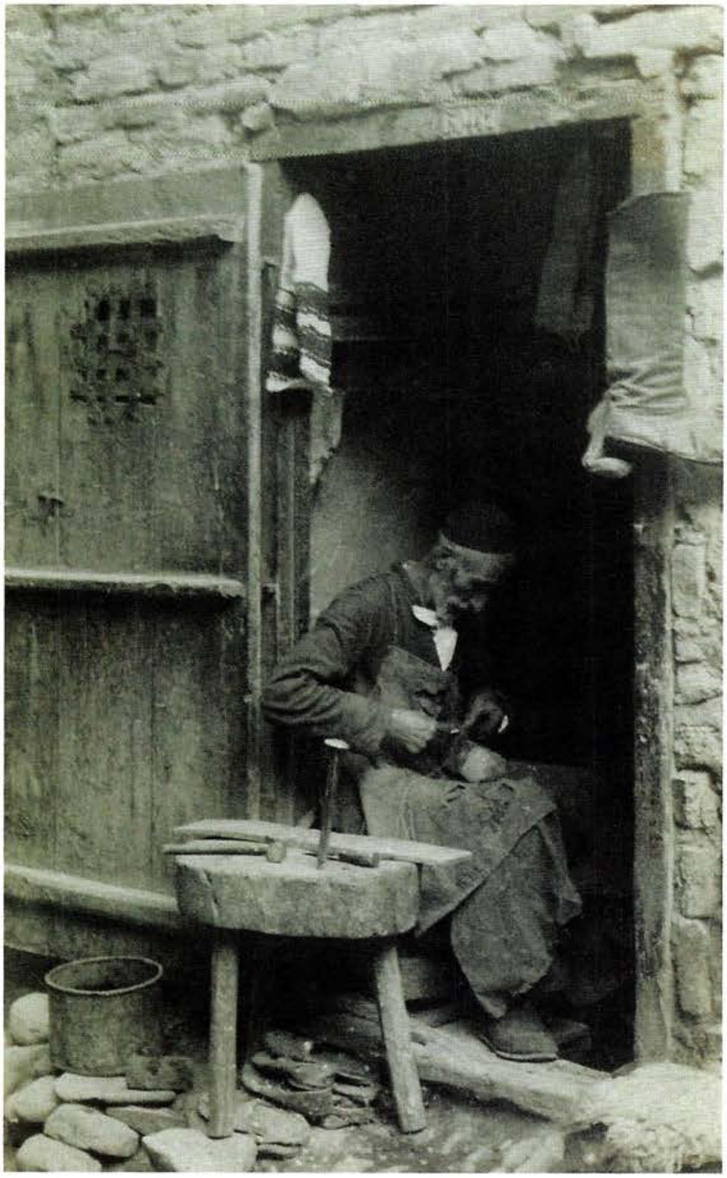
Two 18th-century panoramas of Istanbul for sale at Sotheby's, London (previous page). Above: the Old City is a raging inferno

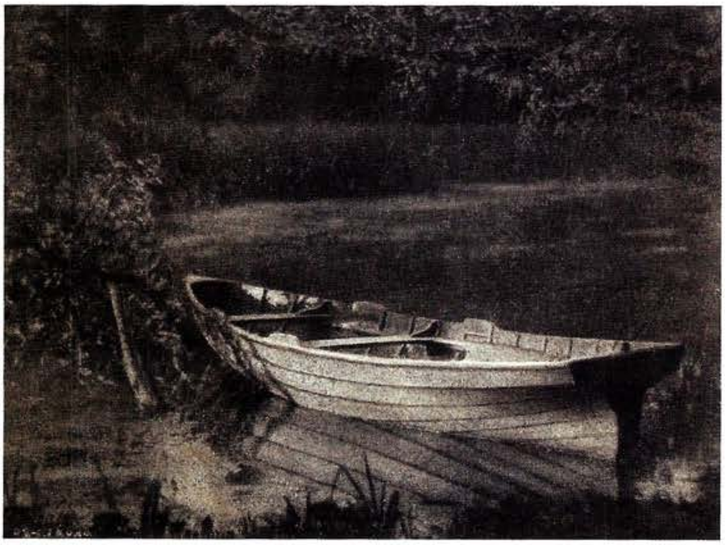




AND THE GOLDEN HORN TEEMS WITH BOATS FULL OF ANXIOUS CITIZENS. BELOW: THE CITY ON A WINDY DAY, SEEN FROM THE ASIAN SHORE



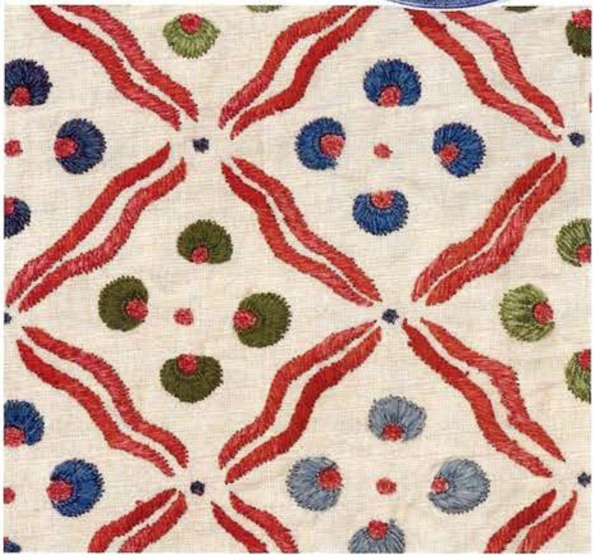




Quiet Resistance: Pictorialism in Russian Photography

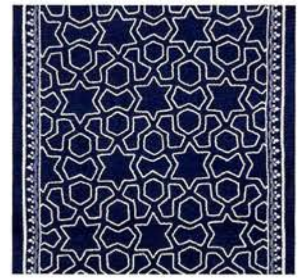
Istanbul Modern
Until May 25, 2008

Prizing aesthetics above content, and poetry above literality, Russia's Pictorialist photographers fell so far out of favour in the age of Socialist Realism that in the 1930s they were unable to practise publicly. But they continued to produce their nostalgic, painterly pictures in secret. Yeremin's Crimean 'Shoemaker' (left) and Svischov-Paola's ghostly 'Boat' (bottom left) are two of the images in this magical show from the Moscow House of Photography. www.istanbulmodern.org



Alidad's Bosphorus Collection,

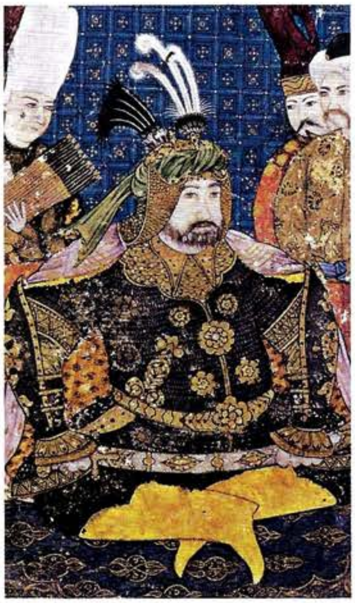
Chelsea Textiles, London

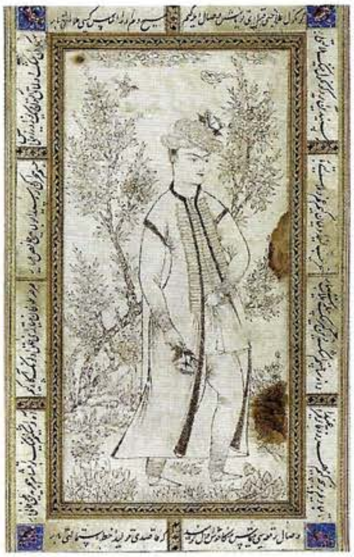


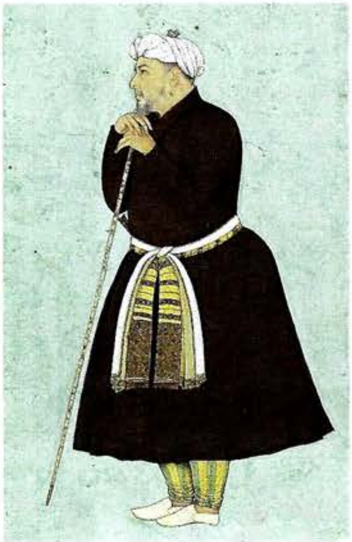
The London-based Iranian interior designer Alidad finds the bold graphic patterns of Ottoman textiles easier to adapt to architecture than intricate Persian designs. The white-cord-on-blue 'Cyrus' (right) is an exception, though it recalls Ottoman inlaid woodwork as much as the 16th-century Persian tile design on which it is based. It is one of ten fabrics in Alidad's new Bosphorus Collection.

'Roya' (above) is a diamond design directly inspired by the wavy lines and dots of Ottoman *cintamani*.

Perfect for curtains or upholstery, the range is beautifully embroidered by hand in India in the faded corals, powdered blues and sage greens of old textiles. www.alidad.com







Istanbul, Isfahan, Delhi – Three Capitals of Islamic Art: Masterpieces from the Louvre
Sakıp Sabancı Museum, Istanbul
Until June 1, 2008

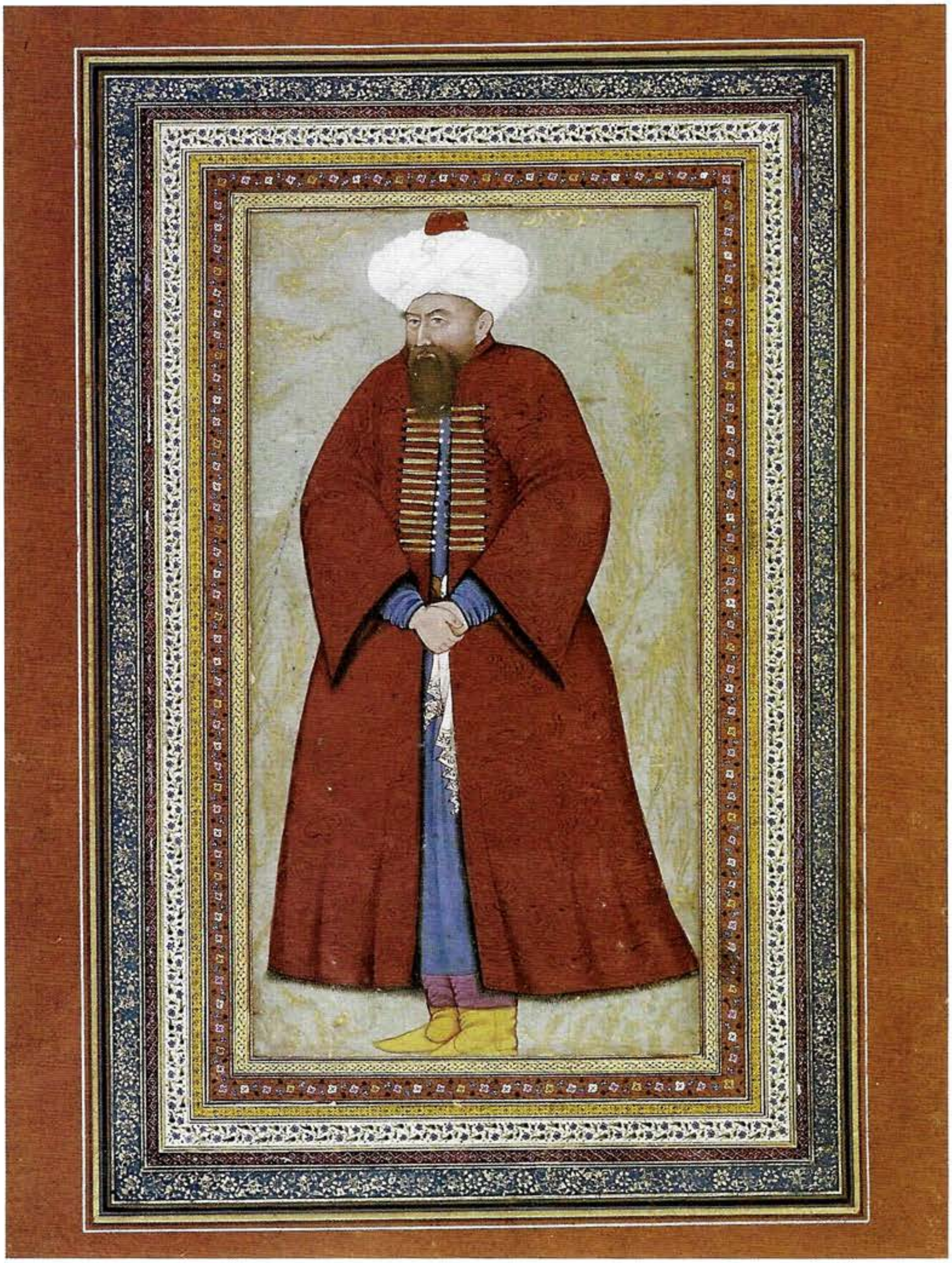
The SSM's latest show explores the contrasting styles of Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal art.

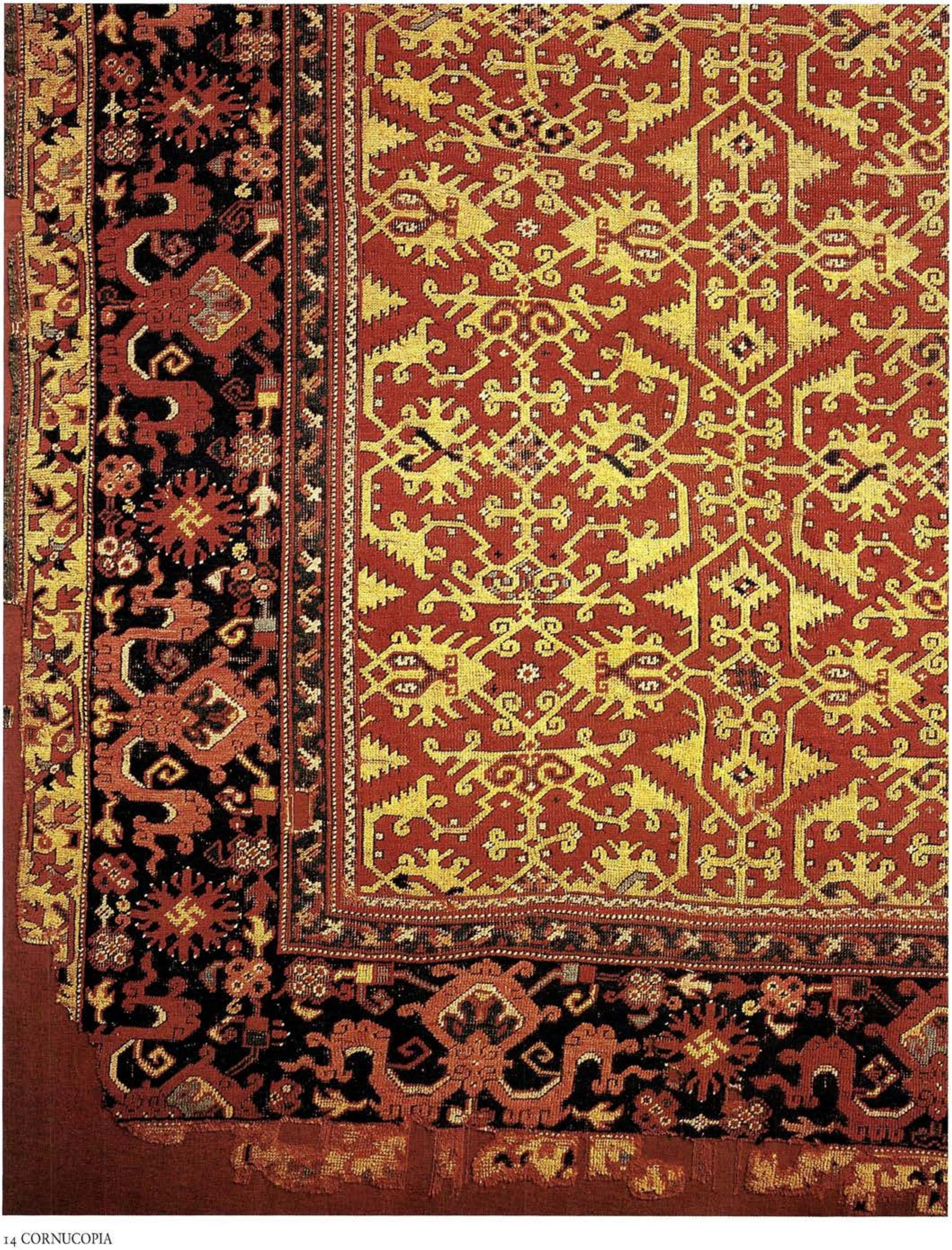
The Louvre's 1480 early Iznik bowl (opposite, centre) has dense white foliage and spirals on a deep cobalt blue – a design typical of the last years of Mehmet the Conqueror's reign, when Iznik first became a match for Yuan porcelain. The Persian dish from 17th-century Kirman (opposite, top) has the same palmettes but here, dancing across a deep blue ground, they gain an ethereal beauty.

Miniatures are the area where styles (and footwear) overlap the most. Mustafa II in his splendid armour (left) is by Levni, the Tulip Period master who brought a new individualism to Ottoman painting. The fine young Ottoman man holding a rose, framed by a poem (centre left), is 16th-century.

Khvajah Abu'l-Hasan was the Mughal Shah Jahangir's "Pillar of the Empire". In Mir Hashim's portrait (bottom left), he exudes a powerful yet serene dignity.

The 17th-century Safavid portrait of an Ottoman sultan's envoy to Isfahan (below) recalls the toings and froings between rival courts. Character and kaftan are perfectly caught.
muze.sabanciuniv.edu/exhibition/





PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRITZ VON DER SCHULENBURG

Colossal carpets

DANIEL SHAFFER ON THE EVENTS IN ISTANBUL THAT BREATHED NEW LIFE INTO ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT CARPET COLLECTIONS

Museum of Turkish
and Islamic Arts, Istanbul

In the heart of old Sultanahmet, facing Ayasofya and the Blue Mosque across the Byzantine Hippodrome, is the fine palace built for Ibrahim Pasha, Süleyman the Magnificent's grand vizier. Here the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum (TIEM) proudly holds what is arguably the greatest collection of historical oriental carpets anywhere in the world. The museum is a Mecca for enthusiasts and scholars alike, but far too little appreciated by the public at large.

The bulk of the collection of more than 1,600 pieces consists of Ottoman-period rugs and carpets. Large and small, courtly and rustic, such carpets were woven in imperial ateliers and commercial urban and cottage workshops, as well as on domestic looms all over Anatolia, between the 13th and 18th centuries, and were traditionally given by the rich and powerful, and by simple villagers, as pious donations (*vakf*) to mosques and tombs the length and breadth of the Ottoman Empire.

The TIEM collection is just one part of the incredible treasury of woven art, an unparalleled account of Turkey's cultural heritage gathered and safeguarded in the 20th century by the Vakıflar (Pious Foundations) and the ministries of the secular Turkish State.

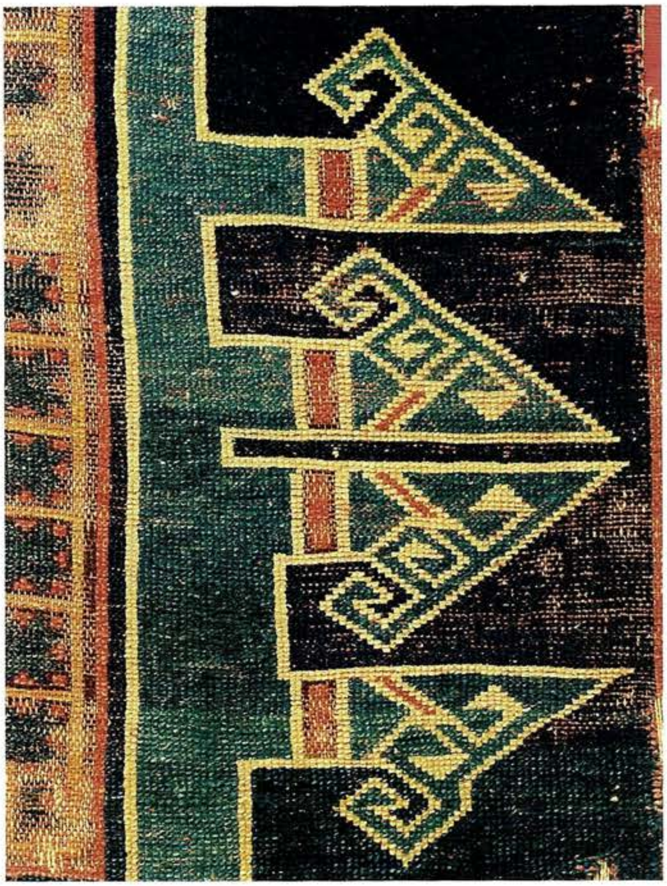
The jewel that underpins the TIEM's holdings is a group of massive, boldly conceived pre-Ottoman carpets and fragments (top right) usually attributed to Seljuk central Anatolia, having been found in the early 1900s in the 13th-century Alaeddin Keykubad complex in Konya and the Eşrefoğlu Mosque in nearby Beyşehir. Two of the grandest of these carpets, with their austere but complex geometries, were chosen for the memorable *Turks* exhibition at London's Royal Academy in 2005.

In April 2007, for the International Conference on Oriental Carpets (ICOC) in Istanbul, the TIEM unveiled an unforgettable temporary exhibition in which the already incomparable semi-permanent arrangement that dominates the museum's galleries – including the Konya Seljuk carpets and a wide array of Ottoman period rugs and large carpets (so-called "Holbeins" and "Lottos" and star and medallion Ushaks), prayer rugs and *safs* (multiple-niche mosque carpets) – was supplemented by spectacular pieces never before displayed.

In addition to its Turkish carpet treasures – which were augmented in the exhibition by a good number of seldom-seen but spectacularly bold and beautiful early Anatolian village rugs – the TIEM has a very significant group of grand 16th-to-18th-century Persian and Caucasian classical carpets, luxury imports collected from mosques along the trade route connecting Asia Minor to the East. It was these imposing weavings that were the most immediately dramatic temporary exhibits. From Persia there were two Kerman "vase" carpets, one a sparkling large 16th-century fragment, as well as a Khorasan "shrub" carpet and two magnificent *chahar bagh* garden carpets from northwestern Iran. And from the Caucasus, the TIEM curators had chosen a varied dozen of extraordinary "dragon", "blossom" and "palmette" carpets, some of them unfamiliar variants on well-known themes.

The special six-month display was made possible by a major fundraising initiative from ICOC. A new conservation facility was created in which 30 conservators spent eight months cleaning and mounting 119 carpets.

As part of the preparation for the hugely successful Istanbul conference in April, the chairman of the local committee, Mehmet Çetinkaya, and his colleagues on the ICOC international committee, seeing an exceptional opportunity to increase appreciation and awareness of historic carpets and to encourage the stewardship of existing museum collections, launched an appeal via their websites (icoc-istanbul.org and icoc-orientalrugs.org).



TWO FAMOUS EXAMPLES OF THE MUSEUM'S MOSQUE CARPETS. OPPOSITE: 16TH-CENTURY 'LOTTO' ARABESQUE CARPET, PROBABLY WOVEN IN UŞAK, WESTERN ANATOLIA, FROM THE MURAT PASHA MOSQUE IN ANTALYA. ABOVE: A DRAMATIC 13TH- OR 14TH-CENTURY SELJUK CARPET FROM THE TOMB OF ALAEDDIN KEYKUBAD IN KONYA

In addition to raising $25,000 from North American individuals, the website appeal was spotted by the Massachusetts-based Turkish Cultural Foundation, which promptly proposed to donate up to $250,000 for the cleaning and conservation project, with the important proviso that the Turkish government match this amount. After several meetings with the ministry of tourism and culture, this was agreed and work began, with Çetinkaya organising the project and liaising with the TIEM director, Seracettin Şahin, and the curator, Gönül Tekeli.

The result has been a triumph: the cleaning, conservation and presentation of many historic carpets; a feast for the eyes and minds of a dedicated following; and an eye-opener for the general public. Much kudos to all. ◆

Daniel Shaffer is executive editor of HALI Magazine (www.hali.com) daniel.shaffer@hali.com

Textile exhibitions organized around ICOC in April 2007 included ikats at the TIEM, Transylvanian carpets at the Sakıp Sabancı Museum, velvets at the Sadberk Hanım Museum and palace silks at the Topkapı – see CORNUCOPIA 37

The Turkish Cultural Foundation, which underwrote the TIEM carpets' conservation, holds lectures in Washington DC, Boston and Istanbul and conducts cultural tours of Turkey: www.turkishculturalfoundation.org

A tale of two halves

An ambitious exhibition of blue and white porcelain finally sees the light of day in Stockholm. John Carswell, who dreamt it up twenty years ago, pieces together the history

Blåvitt (Blue and White), Medelhavsmuseet (Mediterranean Museum), Stockholm. Until August 15

The idea for this exhibition was conceived two decades ago and almost came to fruition then. The intention was to display at the Smithsonian in Washington some of the finest, and earliest, blue and white porcelain from the Topkapı Palace in a lifesize replica of the Murad II Mosque at Edirne.

This mosque is lined with spectacular blue and white tiles, illustrating the remarkable impact of Yuan and early Ming porcelain. Dedicated in 1435/6, 20 years before Mehmet II captured Constantinople and made it his capital, it demonstrates that blue and white had already reached Europe at least as early as the 15th century. We now know that the famous Fonthill vase, discovered since, was in Hungary by the 14th century.

The reasons that this exhibition never took place do not concern us here. I never imagined that it would be revived and mentally shelved the whole project. But I did retain all the photographs and plans.

Two years ago, I was in Stockholm and met Dr Sanne Houby-Nielsen, the dynamic new director of the Medelhavsmuseet (Mediterranean Museum) and Ostasiatiska Museet (Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities). I cannot remember how the failed Smithsonian exhibition came up in conversation, but she asked if I had the original plans, particularly the photographs. When I replied yes, she immediately said she would put on the exhibition, even re-creating the Murad II Mosque.

I was frankly sceptical, as such an undertaking would need the co-operation of the Topkapı and the Turkish government. Since the devastating earthquake of 1999, most of the 12,000 pieces of Chinese porcelain have been in storage, and the few on display sit safely on the bottom of the cases. The loan of such fragile and valuable porcelain was extremely unlikely. The only exceptions in recent years had been for the splendid *Turks* exhibition at the Royal Academy in 2005 (Cornucopia 33) and a couple of years later for the 2007 Korea World Ceramic Biennale, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Turkey.

But I underestimated the persuasive powers of the director and her Swedish colleague, Sigrid Falkman. To my astonishment they announced just before Christmas that they had the necessary agreement, and at the same time a promise from Queen Silvia of Sweden to open the exhibition on April 11. This meant that the whole exhibition had to be installed in exactly three months, with a complicated catalogue in Swedish, Turkish and English. That this incredible deadline was met is nothing short of miraculous. In the event, the Topkapı agreed to lend 20 pieces of Yuan and early Ming porcelain, and the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art a further five.

Opposite: the exhibition's centrepiece, 'the greatest piece of blue and white in the world', is a Yuan double-gourd vase from the Topkapi. Left: part of another gourd vase, from the V&A; the upper half is in Moscow and an historic reunion is planned. Top row: the 15th-century spiralling flowers that inspired Ottoman pottery. Bottom row: a giant platter (left) and a shamanistic jar handle (right), both 14th-century

The intention of the show was to trace how blue and white porcelain developed during the Mongol hegemony in China, and the impact of the transition from Yuan to Ming dynasty. This was helped by the inclusion of early 15th-century porcelain from the collection amassed by King Gustav VI Adolph, grandfather of the present King, and a distinguished Sinologist.

A further aim was to trace the influence of blue and white porcelain on 15th-century Islamic pottery, in particular on the tiles in the Murad II Mosque at Edirne, on the European mainland. Important sherds from Fustat (old Cairo) and Kharakhoto in the Gobi Desert came from the Medelshavsmuseet and the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm.

Of all the material on loan from Istanbul, the most outstanding piece is the famous double-gourd vase from the Topkapı – the greatest piece of blue and white in the world. Displayed in the centre of the gallery, it is possible to view it in detail from all sides. This extraordinary object has eight facets, each painted with a combination of flowers, birds and insects, making a total of 16 different panels. As Regina Krahl points out in her catalogue essay, these scenes relate directly to painting of the Yuan dynasty. There has been much speculation about what such a vessel might have been used for, and what it might have contained, but it may simply have been a vehicle to display the virtuosity of the artist.

Three other complete examples of such double-gourd vases are known – two in the Topkapı, the third in Japan – but none competes in quality with this one. Two further vases once existed. The lower half of one is in the Ardebil Collection in Iran. The other vase has its lower half in the V&A in London, while its upper part resides in the State Museum of Oriental Art in Moscow. Both parts have metal mounts, and the Moscow one has an additional spout, handle and hinged lid that transform it into a ewer. It was planned to unite the two pieces in Stockholm and agreement was reached with the two museums, but alas it was not possible to reunite them in time for the opening.

Blue and white porcelain was developed on a grand scale during the latter part of the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), when the Mongols ruled China from Dadu (present-day Beijing). It is generally accepted that blue and white production accelerated in the second quarter of the 14th century, and though much Yuan porcelain was exported westwards by land and sea as far as the Mediterranean, it was also present in significant quantities in Mongolia itself, as shown by material from Kharakhoto as well as from recent excavations at Karakorum, the Mongol capital founded by Ghenghis Khan.

The exhibition also explores the leading role the Mongols played in the development of blue and white at Jingdezhen in south central China. As a result of their conquest of and western Asia, the Mongols adopted the practice of communal eating. This demanded large-scale vessels such as bowls and platters, a complete break with the smaller scale of the Song dynasty wares that came before.

As to the motifs that decorate Yuan blue and white, the vessels on show display the whole repertoire. These include peonies, chrysanthemums, lotuses, grapevines, melons and pomegranates, combined with dragons, phoenixes, *qilin* (fantastic quadrupeds), pairs of conjugal ducks and pheasants, and all sorts of insects and tiny animals. One splendid bowl is vigorously painted on the outside with the "Three Friends", bamboo, pine and prunus blossom. A large jar (*guan*) has two fantastic handles of monsters' heads with fanged teeth and staring eyes. They are very similar to the devils in a famous series of albums in the Topkapı, and share overtones of Shamanism. Among other decorative motifs typical of Yuan wares are Taoist/Buddhist good-luck emblems, breaking serpentine waves, lotus panels, and bands of classic scroll and diaper patterns.

With the collapse of the Yuan dynasty and the retreat of the Mongols in 1381, the potteries at Jingdezhen survived, but the production of blue and white took a new twist. In the early 15th century, although certain decorative motifs survived in a somewhat stylised form, there was a new emphasis on more open design akin to contemporary Chinese scroll painting rather than the earlier crowded panels. This is exemplified by the two great dishes on display, as well as smaller dishes with floral bouquets.

The latter are of particular interest for the way they clearly inspired Ottoman pottery in the 15th century, including many of the blue and white hexagonal tiles of the Murad II Mosque. The exhibition has reproduced two walls of the mosque in full scale, into which are ingeniously set vitrines with the porcelain of the type which inspired them. There is also a replica of the *mihrab* niche mosque, a stalactite vault where the underglaze tiles show the influence of Yuan and early Ming porcelain.

All in all, *Blåvitt* is a vivid testimony to the skill and efforts of the museum staff and their Turkish collaborators. ◆

John Carswell is the author of *Blue and White: Chinese Porcelain Around the World* and *Iznik Pottery* (both British Museum Press). Also see CORNUCOPIA 19, 25 and 28.

Blåvitt, the catalogue, is in Swedish, Turkish and English, with contributions by John Carswell, Regina Krahl and Ayşe Erdoğdu: www.medelhavsmuseet.se

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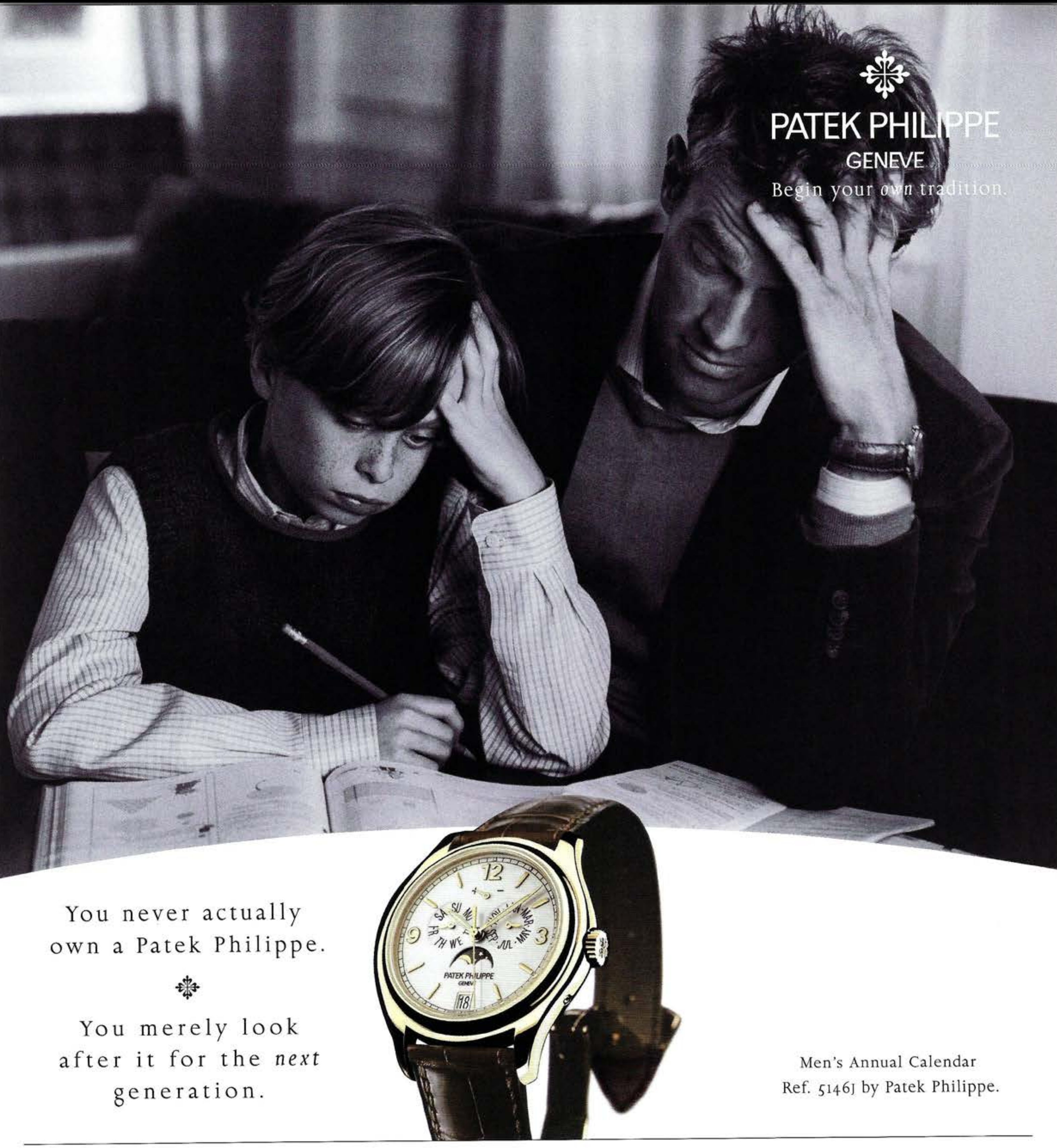

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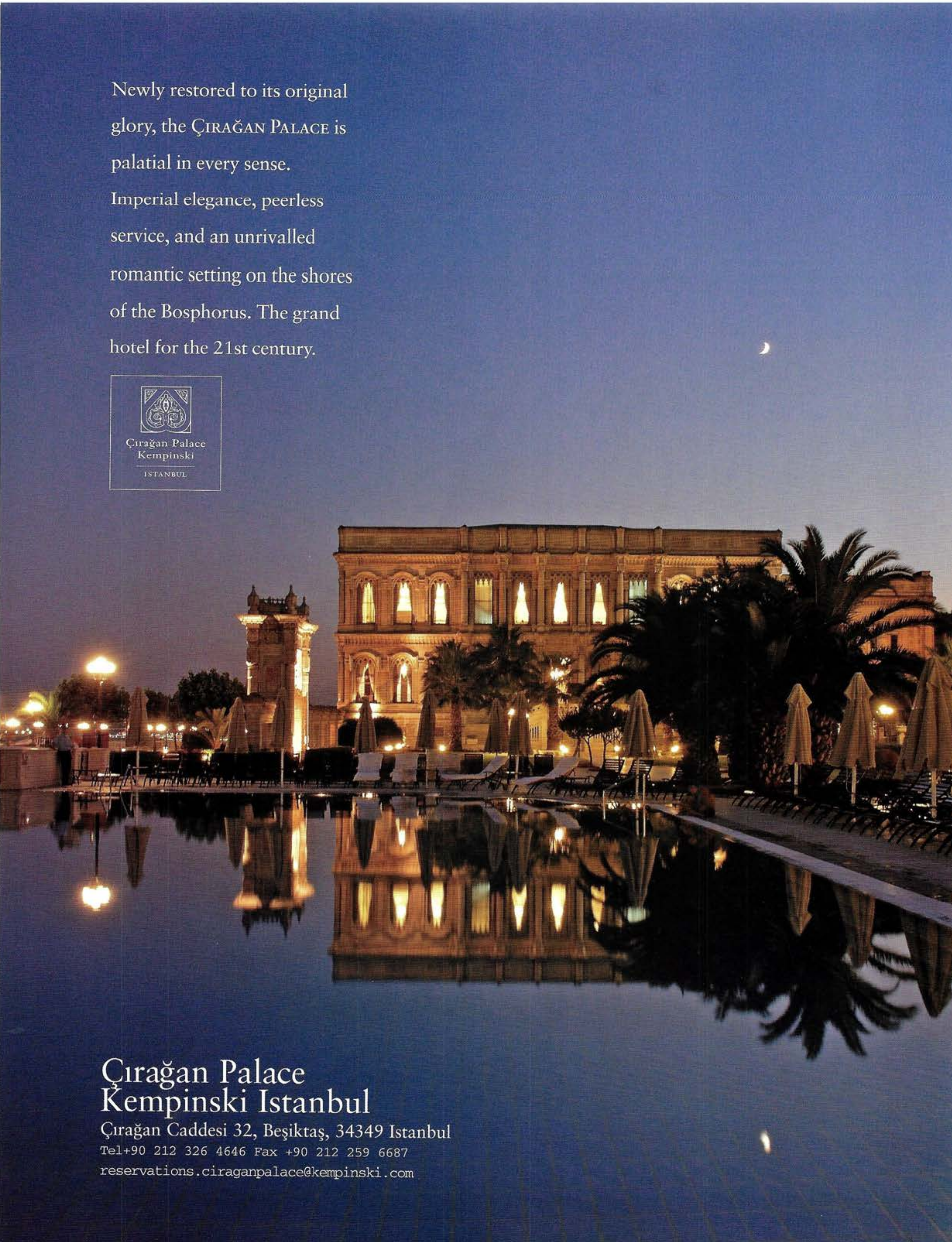

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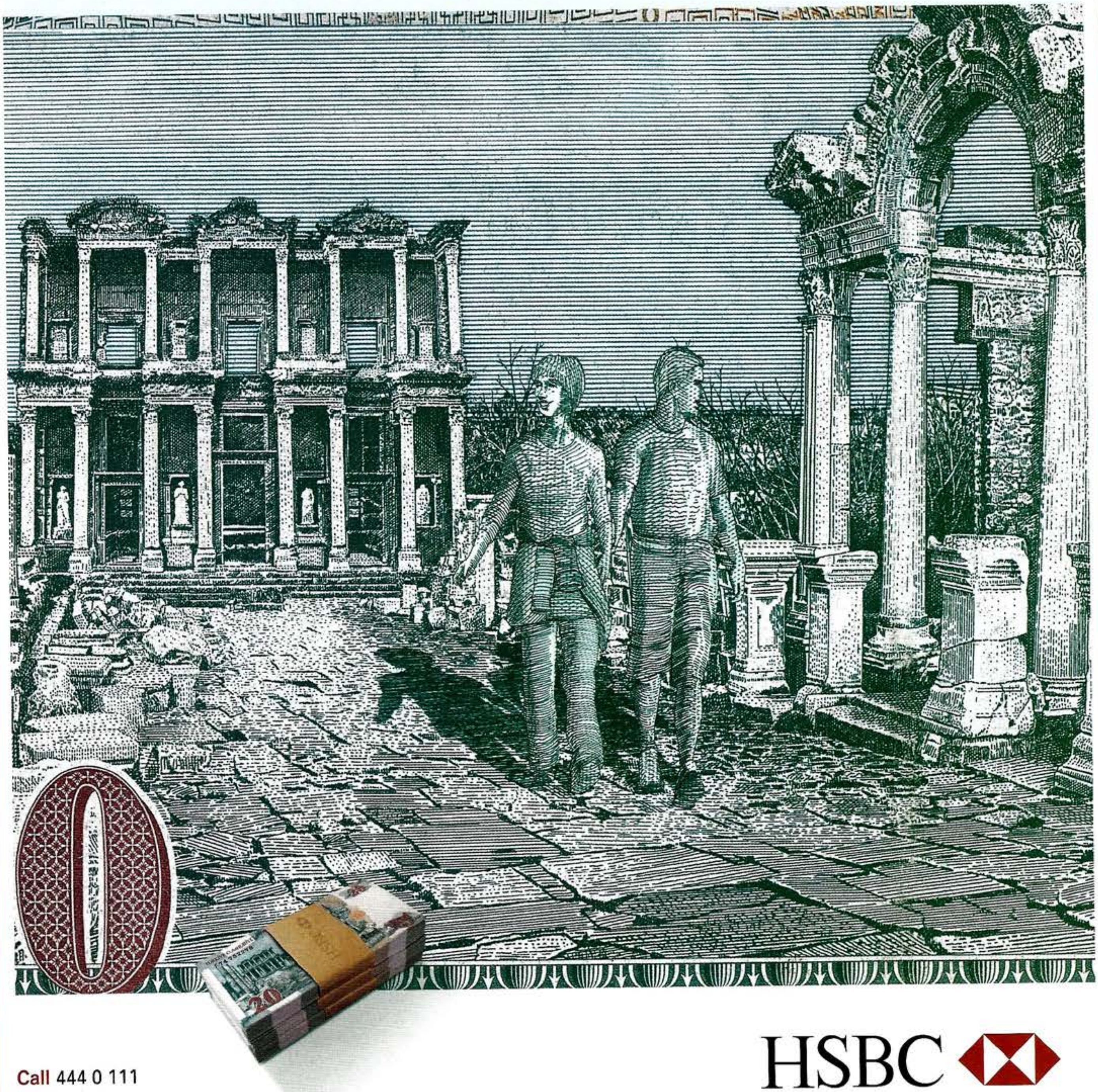

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Polychrome, underglaze-painted, stoneware Iznik plate.
Photograph by Fritz von der Schulenburg

Books

REVIEWS

The last nomads, travels in Thrace and the dark arts of diplomacy

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HARALD BÖHMER

A bride in Çamkalabak on the northern Aegean with her trousseau of kilim sacks (ala çuvals) and chests of textiles

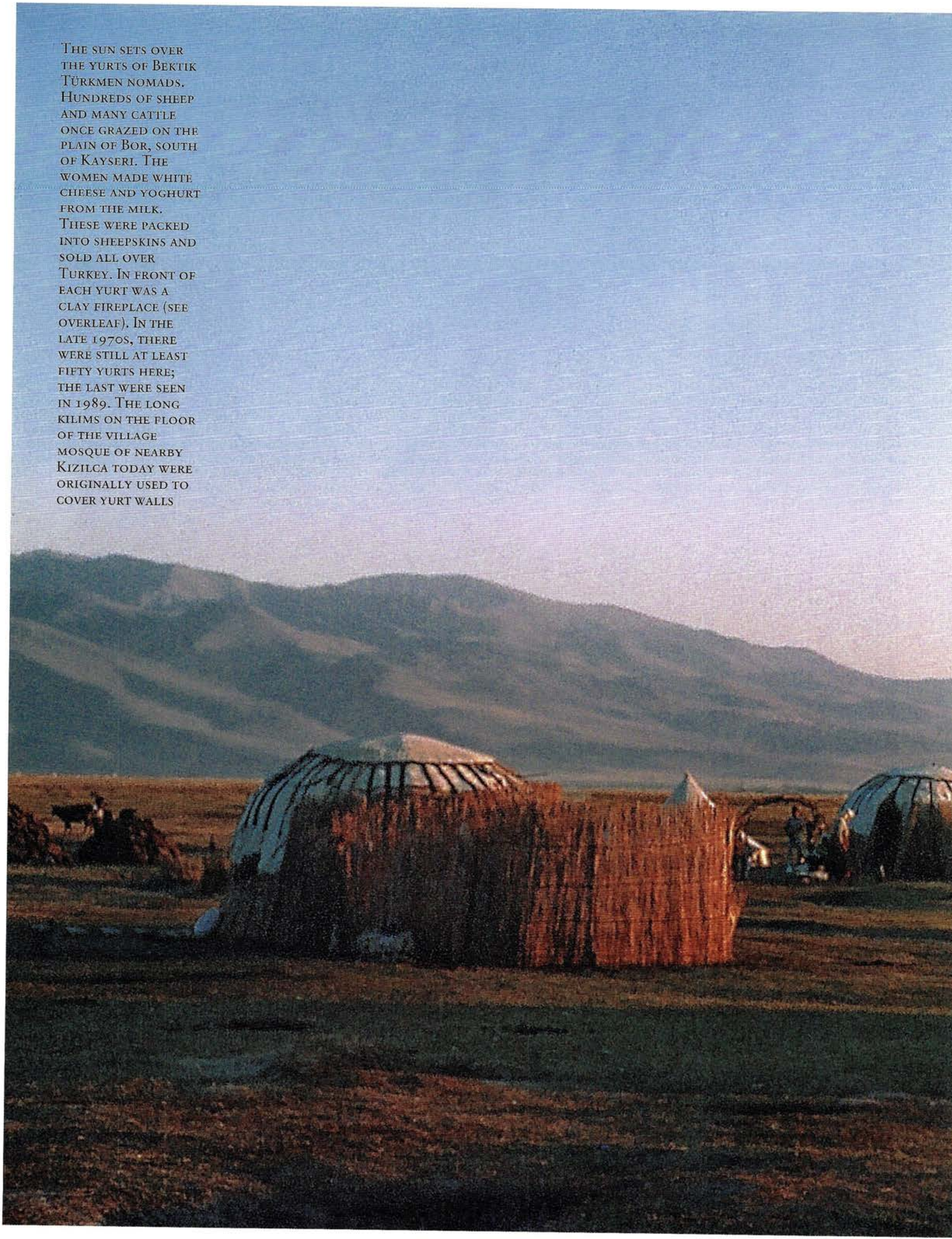
The story of the smiling camel

By Robert Chenciner

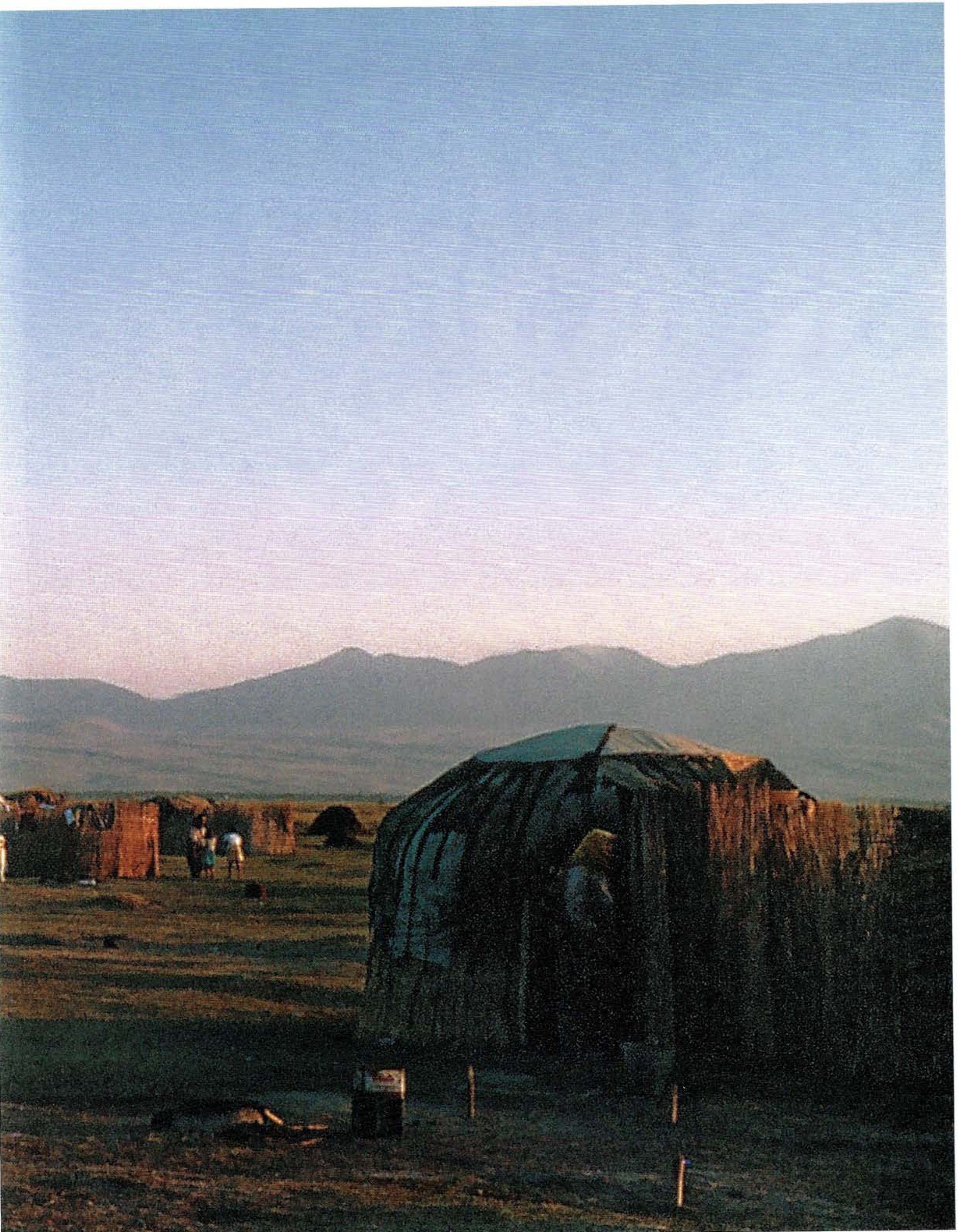
Nomads in Anatolia: Their Life and Their Textiles – Encounters with a Vanishing Culture, by Harald Böhmer with Josephine Powell and Şerife Atlıhan. Remhöb-Verlag, 316pp, £75

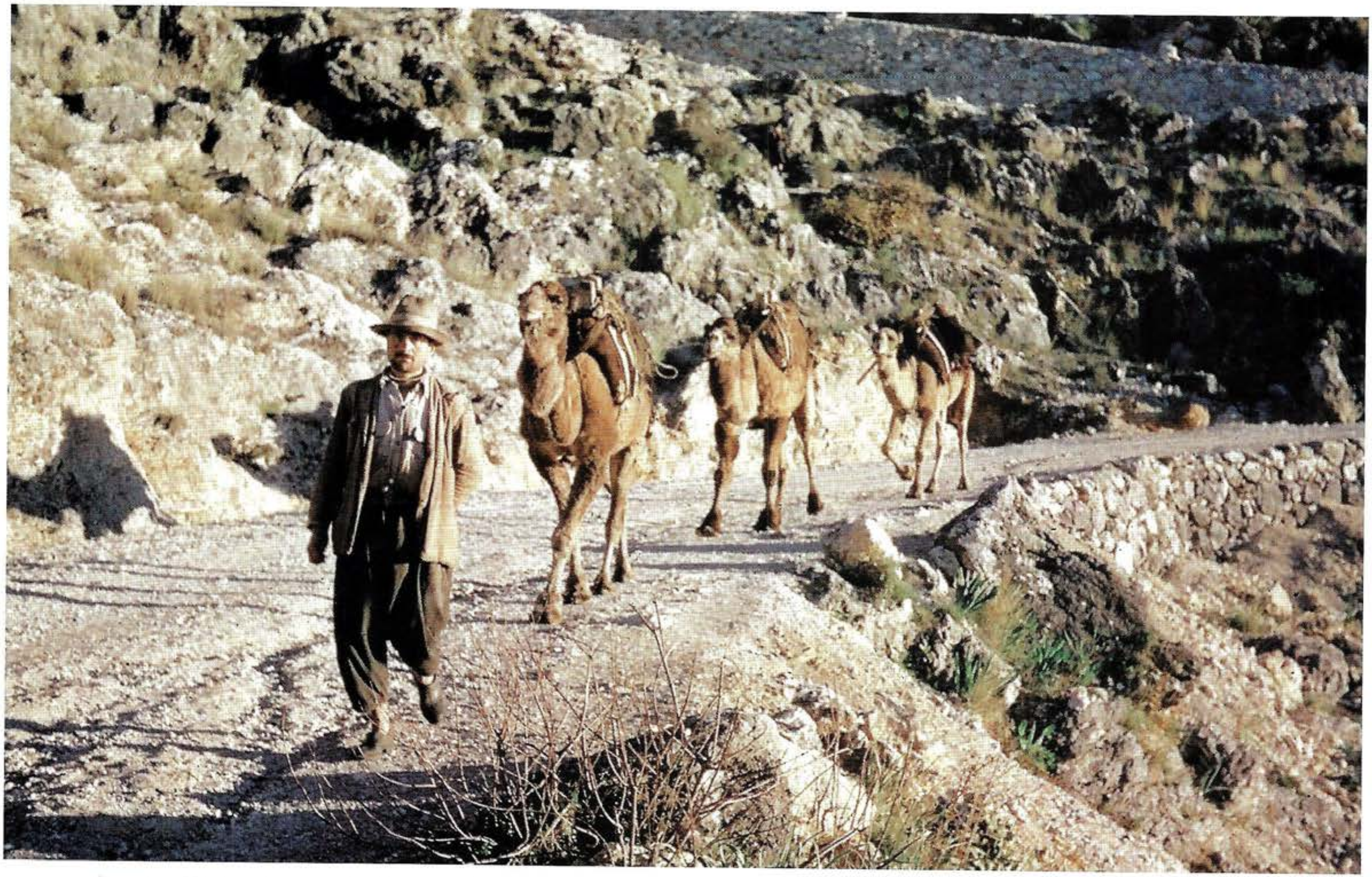
The camel in question graces the glorious cover of this beautiful book which contains around 600 photographs of Turkish nomads taken over the decades, mainly by Harald Böhmer. Other classics include a shot of his long-term collaborator, Josephine Powell, camera-eyeballing a fighting camel; a dust storm; performing bears; spinning, weaving and braiding; breads, butter and cheese; giant sheepdogs; glowing mothers and children; and everything to do with yurts, tents and shepherds' huts. The pictures are suffused with bubbling smiles and good humour, in contrast to the struggle that has coloured their subjects' honourable, archaic existence.

Life is hard for nomads, but as they disappear, humanity will be the poorer. Every time you look at these pictures, they seem to take you further into the world of the Türkmen and the Yürük, and of the once all-powerful White Sheep

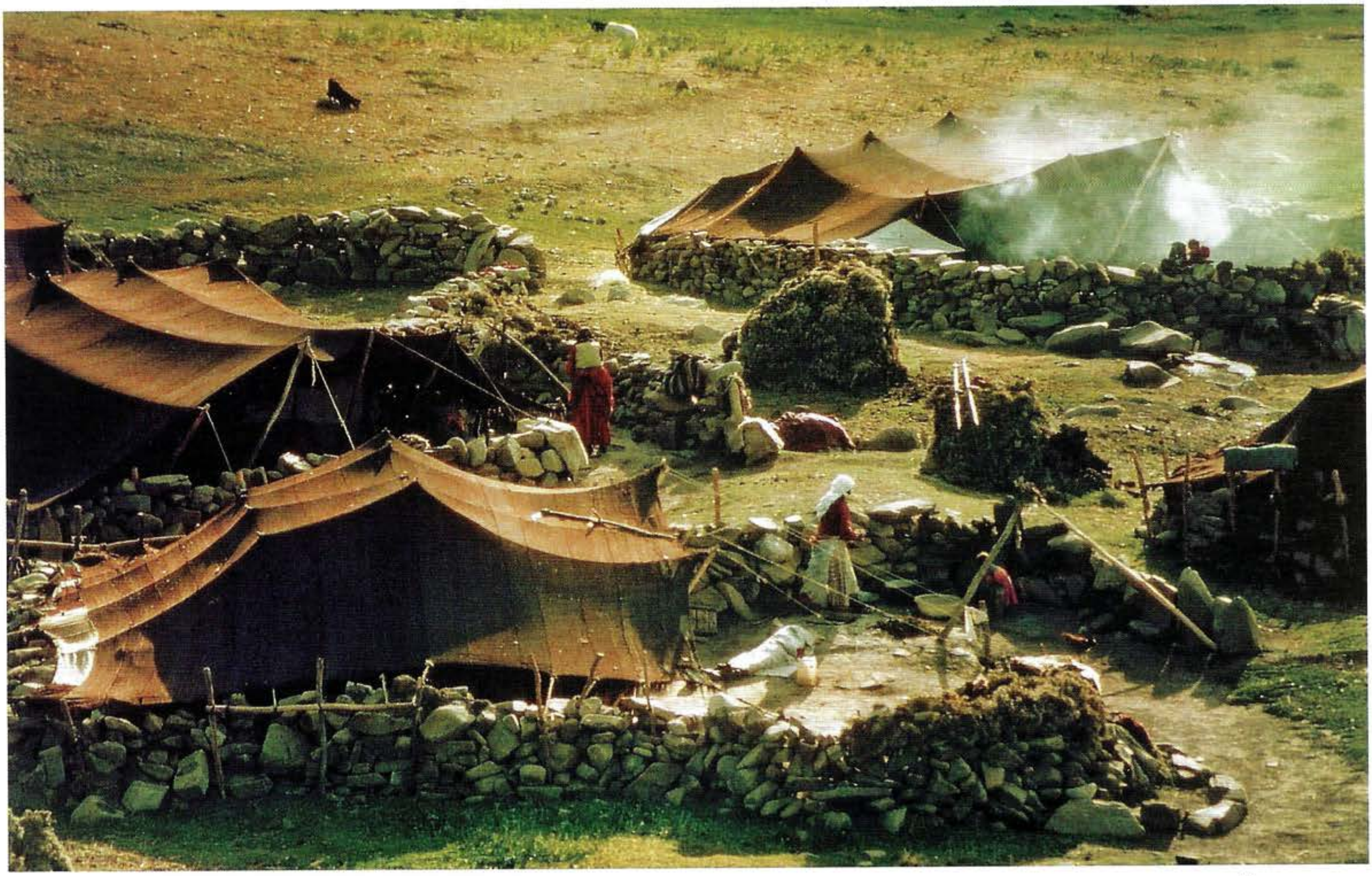


THE SUN SETS OVER THE YURTS OF BEKTIK TÜRKMEN NOMADS. HUNDREDS OF SHEEP AND MANY CATTLE ONCE GRAZED ON THE PLAIN OF BOR, SOUTH OF KAYSERI. THE WOMEN MADE WHITE CHEESE AND YOGHURT FROM THE MILK. THESE WERE PACKED INTO SHEEPSKINS AND SOLD ALL OVER TURKEY. IN FRONT OF EACH YURT WAS A CLAY FIREPLACE (SEE OVERLEAF). IN THE LATE 1970S, THERE WERE STILL AT LEAST FIFTY YURTS HERE; THE LAST WERE SEEN IN 1989. THE LONG KILIMS ON THE FLOOR OF THE VILLAGE MOSQUE OF NEARBY KIZILCA TODAY WERE ORIGINALLY USED TO COVER YURT WALLS

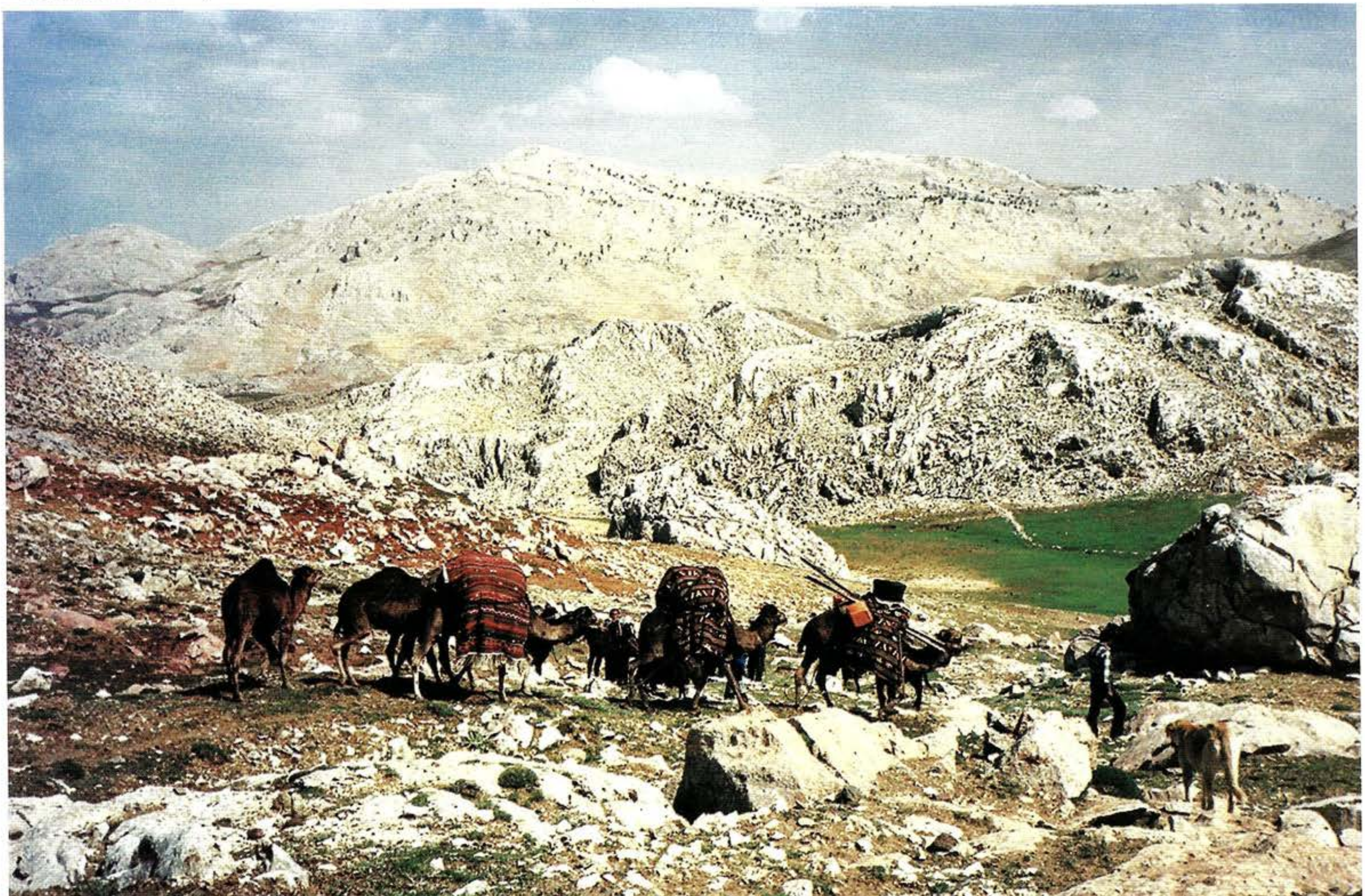


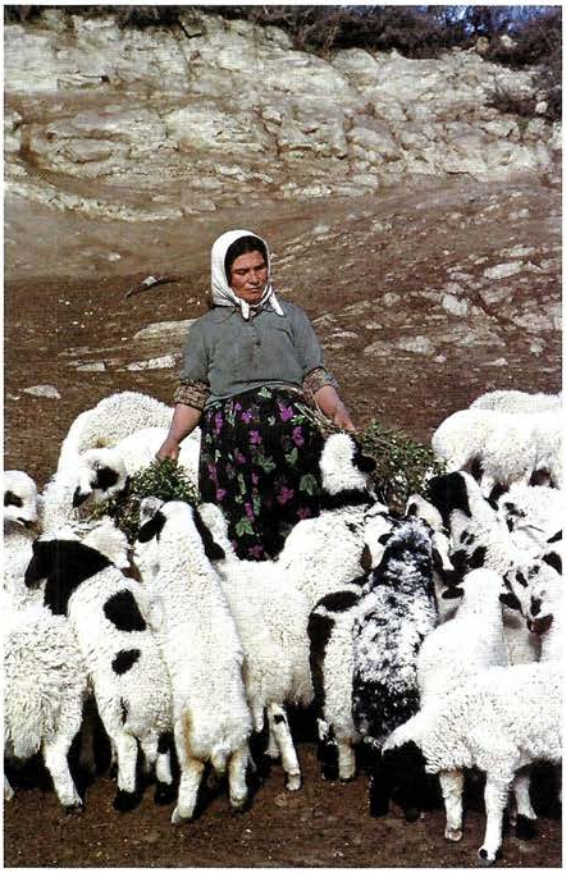


Above: a Yürük nomad and camels in the mountains near Alanya, 1960. Below: making yufka (flatbread) on the plain of Bor

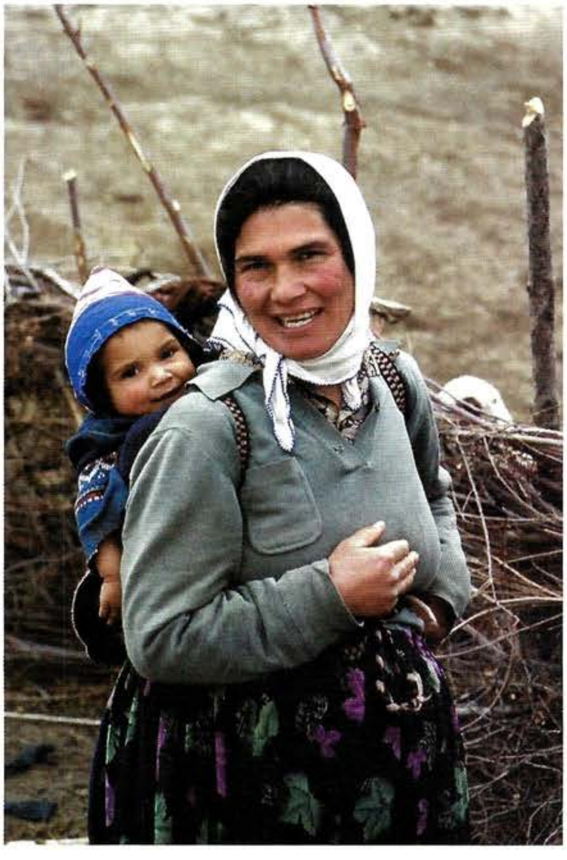


Above: in the Tirişin Mountains near Lake Van. Below: Şerife Atlihan's 1980 photograph of a caravan in the southern Taurus





Akkoyunlu (White Sheep) Fatma Kurtan with her fat-tailed lambs and youngest of nine children



(Akkoyunlu) and Black Sheep (Karakoyunlu) clans. Böhmer has produced an uplifting testament to Turkey's last nomads, the portrayal of whom was his life's work as well as that of his wife, Renate, and the late, much-missed Josephine Powell.

I recall from thirty years ago how whenever I stayed with the Böhmers in Istanbul or in Oldenburg, in northern Germany, Harald would at every moment be writing up his work, planning trips, tinkering with dye experiments, preparing exhibitions or debating ideas about the great theories described at the end of this book. Their Istanbul flats were knee-deep in books, maps, photographs, textiles and objects – and of course the dye plants involved in their ethnographic studies and the Dobag natural-dye project, which would revolutionise the way villagers made rugs, using natural dyes once more. There would be dyes in cooking pots in the kitchen and saturated coloured wool hanging on the verandah.

An unrivalled anthropological photographer, Josephine Powell was also an extraordinary researcher and a focal point for Turks interested in their own nomadic culture. To call her a persistent thinker and lover of debate would be an understatement. Harald and Renate additionally had chemists' discipline and methodology. This book shows he is also a great photographer. They made a splendid team, all gaining from each other.

In the tradition of significant ethnography, they made repeated visits to different families and groups of nomads over many years – a method shared by Caroline Humphreys and described by her as "a long conversation". In addition, there was their love of Anatolian textiles. For Josephine this started with bags used by nomads, progressing to other flatweaves and *chii*, the wrapped-reed screens as yurt walls. In a complementary way, Harald and Renate followed piled and unpiled weavings – though unusually: through the dyes used.

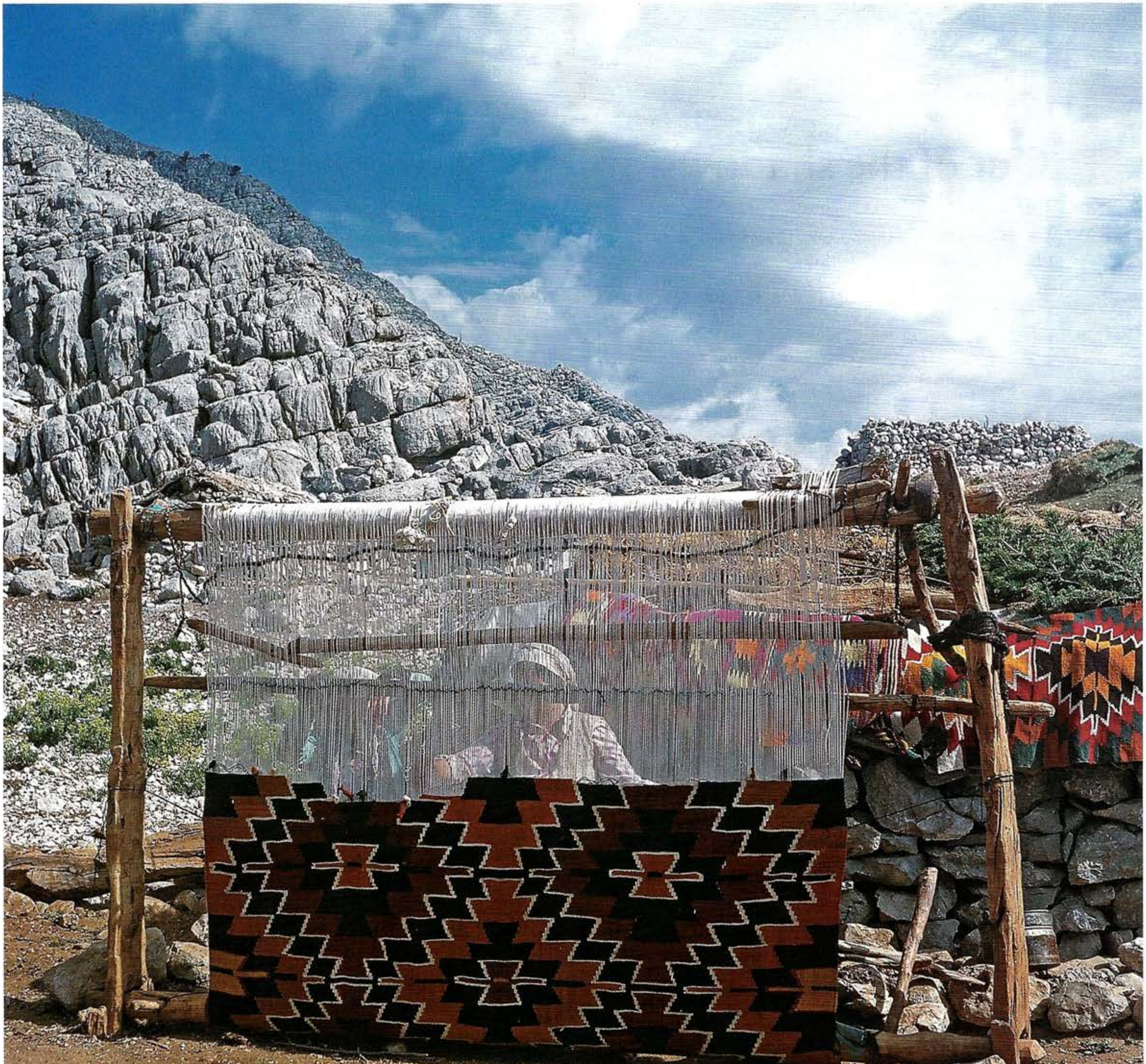
The book's second part covers historical textiles of the Anatolian nomads and features over a hundred rugs, bags and screens – mainly flatweaves. Diagrams show how they are used and close-ups focus on weaving techniques. The textiles are further placed in context by short but profound essays on such intractable subjects as the origins of kilim patterns and Anatolia's 10,000-plus years of cultural history. These almost political questions are best saved until one has much experience and wisdom and have matured well under Böhmer's prolonged critical examination. The translation reads more fluently than his earlier books and captions with accompanying diary extracts give dates, locations and often names of the nomads happily sharing their lives.

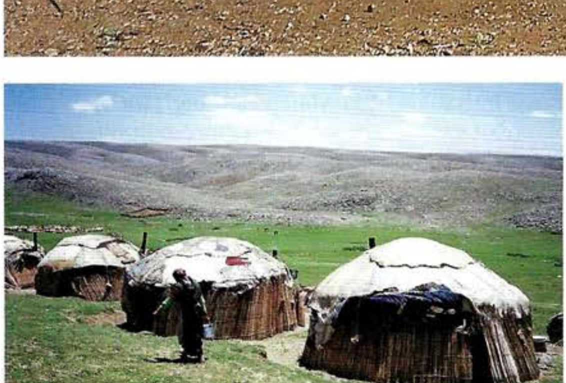
Turkey's nomads have a proud oral culture but, except for rare messages on tombstones – such as "This life is ended, the road never ends" – photographs are the only way to reanimate the legacy of their objects. The pictures showing the fiendishly difficult skill of erecting a yurt so that it stands straight and strong reminded me of Josephine Powell laughing. Buying her first yurt, she found it unexpectedly inexpensive. This turned out to be because she had inadvertently bought only the top "wheel" and not the yurt's sides – those required another expedition. But no need to worry today. Here, enriching the pictures, are clear diagrams of tents, shepherd's huts and looms; historic and current maps relevant to transhumance and migration.

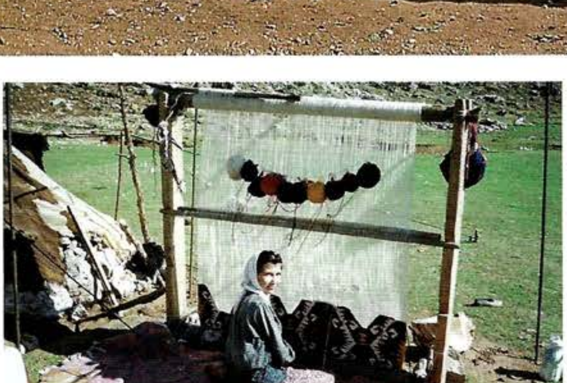
Buy this book. It is a classic, and its primary approach will not be seen again, for the authors' friends and subjects – the nomads of Anatolia – have virtually disappeared. ◆

Exhibition: The publication of *Nomads in Anatolia* coincides with an exhibition in the Netherlands focusing on Anatolian nomadic culture. *The Splendour of Anatolia: The Unknown Turkey* is at the Kunsthall, Rotterdam until June 1. www.kunsthal.nl; +31 (0) 440301

Book offers: *Nomads in Anatolia* (£75) and *Koekboya: Natural Dyes and Textiles* (£72), both by Harald Böhmer, and *Tattooed Mountain Women and Spoon Boxes of Daghestan* (£19.99), by Robert Chenciner, are available post-free to subscribers at www.cornucopia.net





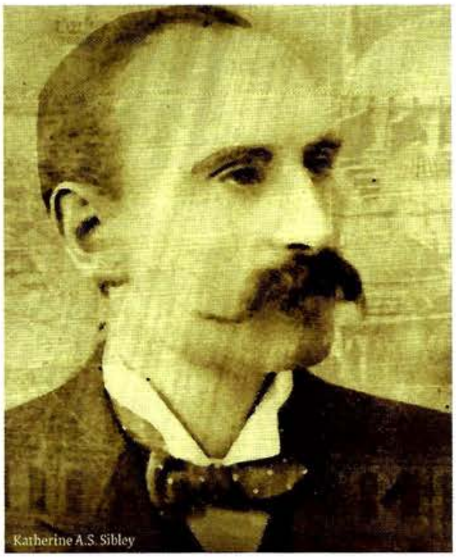


ABOVE AND LEFT: WOMEN OF THE KARAKOYUNLU (BLACK SHEEP) CLAN WEAVE KILIMS HIGH IN THE TAURUS MOUNTAINS. FAR LEFT: A FELLOW KARAKOYUNLU NOMAD WITH HIS BLACK SHEEP. CENTRE LEFT: DISTINCTIVE CENTRAL ASIAN FELT TÜRKMEN YURTS ON UZUN YAYLA (LONG YAYLA), BETWEEN SIVAS AND KAYSERI, IN 1991

Out of the shadows

BY DAVID BARCHARD

Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865–1939), Chief Dragoman of the British Embassy in Turkey
By GR Berridge
Martinus Nijhoff, Leiden and Boston, £64.50


Katherine A.S. Sibley

GERALD FITZMAURICE, CHIEF DRAGOMAN AT THE BRITISH EMBASSY AND EMINENCE GRISE OF BRITISH DIPLOMACY, HAD AN INCALCULABLE INFLUENCE ON ANGLO–TURKISH RELATIONS BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR. A NEW BIOGRAPHY SEEKS TO REFUTE HIS REPUTATION AS A CUNNING, MANIPULATIVE DIPLOMAT-PRINCE OF DARKNESS

Gerald Fitzmaurice, senior dragoman, or Turkish-speaking consular officer, at the British Embassy from 1907 to 1914, is unique in Anglo-Turkish diplomatic history. Though well down the embassy pecking order, his reputation, both in his own lifetime and subsequently, cast a much longer shadow than those of the ambassadors he served. Gertrude Bell, visiting Turkey in 1907, found him "the most interesting man" in Istanbul. His one-time embassy colleague, Aubrey Herbert, the writer and politician, thought he was "cunning as a weasel and as savage". The historian Harold Temperley called him an "unrivalled authority".

Fitzmaurice lives on vividly in popular Turkish history books as a sort of conspirator demon king, Doğan Avcıoğlu and other Turkish writers denouncing him as the hidden hand behind the reactionary religious uprising to restore Abdülhamit II in April 1909. More generally, Fitzmaurice has been blamed for the failure of Britain's relations with Turkey during the Young Turk period. Much of his work probably consisted of running an intelligence operation via local agents, but of this we shall never know. He is perhaps the ultimate *eminence grise* in British diplomatic history.

As befits an *eminence grise*, Fitzmaurice lived in the shadows, cultivating personal obscurity, while ruthlessly trying to bend events inside and outside the British embassy to his will. For Fitzmaurice was that rare and usually short-lived creature, a campaigning diplomat. Among his main targets were his own ambassadors. Fitzmaurice wrote of his fellow southern-Irish Catholic, Sir Nicolas O'Conor: "He shrivelled my heart and warped my reason." Sir Nicolas does admittedly seem to have been a fairly nasty piece of work and a difficult boss to serve under, but one cannot help suspecting that Fitzmaurice's animus arose from Sir Nicolas's failure to give him early promotion. Each time the ambassadorship in Istanbul fell vacant, Fitzmaurice lobbied hard, but unsuccessfully, to have his chosen candidate installed.

As a diplomat, Fitzmaurice tried to impose his views on Turkish politics, too, and even on the Turks themselves. Professor Berridge quotes Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın (as it happens, a lifelong anglophile), writing of Fitzmaurice in 1911: "You meet with this dragoman friend everywhere... he is in newspaper offices till late at night. He is so fond of journalists that some nights he even visits them at their homes. And what a benevolent man he is, too! He says nothing to you but what is for the good and safety of your country. He is more anxious than you yourself at the state of the country."

The habit continued during retirement in inter-war Britain, with Fitzmaurice standing over British survivors of pre-war Istanbul decades in the interwar period to ensure their memoirs stayed "on message" where Abdülhamit and the Young Turks were concerned. He had considerable influence on professional historians, too, particularly the influential and brilliant, but turcophobic, Harold Temperley. So, a century after his time in Istanbul, Fitzmaurice still exerts some sway over western perceptions of Turkey's history.

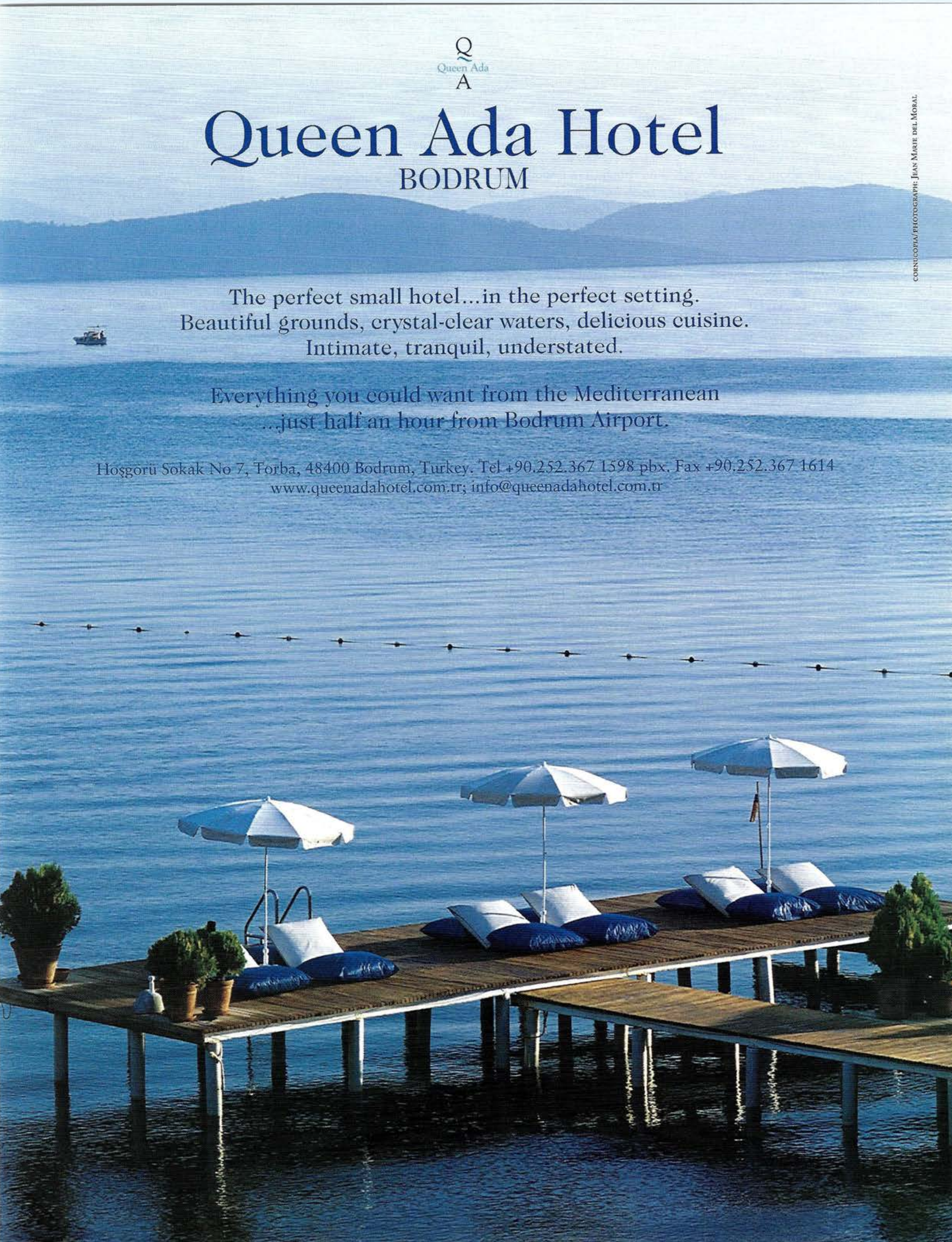
Fitzmaurice was too canny to write an autobiography himself, despite promptings from Temperley, and destroyed his own papers, but he had an Achilles heel: he poured out his feelings on the events of the day in letters to a few friends, and these have survived. Using them and other diplomatic sources, Geoffrey Berridge, a historian of the British Embassy in Turkey, has done something no one would have thought possible a few years ago. He has frogmarched Fitzmaurice out of the shadows and into the daylight in a masterly biographical monograph.

The figure who emerges is no diplomat-prince of darkness but an emotionally thwarted, whiskery bureaucrat with certain obsessions. Fitzmaurice had a quite a lot to be modest about. From an undistinguished middle-class Catholic Irish family, he studied for but gave up on the priesthood, nurtured somewhat theatrical reactionary political views, and had no family of his own, living out his adult life in hotels.

Above all, as Berrridge makes clear, Fitzmaurice chafed at his failure to achieve promotion or later recognition through a knighthood. If the Dardanelles had fallen to the Entente attack in 1915, Fitzmaurice's moment might have come spectacularly. London had thoughts of sending him to Istanbul alongside the commanding admiral to receive the surrender of the Young Turk government and take possession of the city, a final sardonic twisting of the knife for Fitzmaurice's enemies, the Young Turks. But that never happened. Fitzmaurice spent the rest of the war in the obscurity of naval intelligence, retiring from the Foreign Office in 1922.

Readers of this impressively researched book will be a little disappointed that Fitzmaurice does not yield up all his secrets. The moments in his career we learn most about are his work on dull boundary commissions – the most interesting aspect of them is the way British officials bickered among themselves. How much of a hand did Fitzmaurice really have in organising the abortive 1909 "31 March Uprising", (one of the most important moments in Turkish political history in the entire twentieth century), to restore Abdülhamit and clericalist Islam to power? Berridge shows he probably knew about it beforehand. Afterwards his reputation was tarnished by association. But what did he actually do or not do? Even a little speculation would have been helpful.

Fitzmaurice's career has to be



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CORNUCOPIA/PHOTOGRAPH: JEAN MARIE DEL MORAL

seen against the backdrop of an embassy chronically divided internally about the Turks and Britain's policy towards Turkey. Britain itself downgraded Turkey after 1900, as it upgraded Russia as an ally. And somehow the British ambassadors became ever feebler as World War I approached. TE Lawrence argued persuasively that Fitzmaurice's domineering influence was one of the chief causes. Not surprisingly, he hated Lawrence, disparaging his ability to speak Arabic.

Certainly dragoman Fitzmaurice grew steadily stronger as the years passed. It may be that his story is simply an instance of what happens to diplomats who stay on too long after the fall of a government they are close to. At the outset of his career Fitzmaurice had blamed Abdülhamit for violence against Armenians, but towards the end of his reign he achieved lasting rapport with the Sultan, enjoying remarkably good access to a ruler who had little love for the British.

When the Young Turks arrived on the scene, they appeared to Fitzmaurice and the British embassy as a bunch of lower-class parvenus, incapable of running a country. Fitzmaurice detested them for the Jews and Freemasons among them. His attitudes are precisely those that seem so offensive and dated today in the novels of John Buchan.

Fitzmaurice, however, took opposition to the Young Turks to extremes, ignoring the pro-British elements among their civilian wing. Above all he could not see that Turkey had a future. As Berridge makes clear, like generations of British diplomats before him, Fitzmaurice thought the break-up and disappearance of Turkey was just around the corner.

Yet by 1912, when its Christian Balkan neighbours combined to amputate most of its European provinces, the Ottoman Empire, weak, unstable and problem-stricken though it was, had achieved the fundamentals of a modern state. Turkey was actually wealthier than it would be again until long after World War II. Fitzmaurice the diplomat, himself the son of a colonised country, failed to recognise that Turkey, despite the turmoil was here to stay. If he had followed the Young Turks more sympathetically, he would have noticed the rise of nationalism and the impulse to become a nation state.

Instead, during the Balkan Wars he expected the Bulgarians (his favourite Balkan nationality) to take Istanbul and rename it Tsargrad, thus cutting out the Germans and the Russians and neatly solving two British foreign-policy preoccupations. Later he was to spend part of World War One in Sofia, fruitlessly trying to persuade the Bulgarians to join the Entente.

Fitzmaurice did not see himself as anti-Turkish. He spoke Turkish well and his letters are full of a sort of embassy slang, heavy with Turkicisms in which the dragomans call themselves "*tilkis*" or foxes and the ambassador is referred to as "*elchi*" (anyone truly sensitive to Turkish usage would of course have called him *"Sefir Bey"*.) One suspects that this is simply the way Edwardian British colonial officials treated native cultures when they were able to learn their languages.

On some points Fitzmaurice, with his narrow concern for chessboard diplomacy, helped set the scene for later humanitarian disasters. In 1913 Turkey made a secret, last-ditch appeal to Britain to help set up a British-staffed reform system for the Armenians across eastern Turkey and so avert a catastrophe that everyone could see coming. Fitzmaurice fought the proposal tooth and claw, despite a partiality for the Armenians, lest it damage British–Russian relations, pushing instead for an alternative scheme giving Russia the right to station officials across eastern Turkey – something he must have known the Turks would not and could not concede.

Like most diplomatic lives, this one ended in suburbia, with Fitzmaurice stoking his own legend a little by telling small children (quite untruthfully) that he was the man on whom John Buchan's Greenmantle had been based (the model for Greenmantle was, in fact, Fitzmaurice's turcophile adversary, Aubrey Herbert).

In personal terms this book tells a sad story. Professor Berridge likes Fitzmaurice, perhaps lavishing rather more sympathy on him than he deserves, and so giving him the fine public memorial that nobody else would.

Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865–1939), Chief Dragoman of the British Embassy in Turkey is available to subscribers at the special price of £55: www.cornucopia.net

For a complete list of David Barchard's profiles of heroes and anti-heroes in Turkey during the Victorian and Edwardian eras in CORNUCOPIA, see cornucopia.net/barchard.html

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Travels in no-man's-land

BY HEATH LOWRY

The Byzantine Monuments of the Evros/Meriç River Valley
By Robert Ousterhout and Charalambos Bakirtzis
The European Centre for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments, Thessaloniki, 2007

Seldom does one have the opportunity to review a work co-authored by two universally recognised authorities on its subject. So a most welcome addition to the fledgling field of Byzantine architectural history is this book by Robert Ousterhout, a leading American specialist in Byzantine architectural history at the University of Pennsylvania, and Charalambos Bakirtzis, the distinguished Greek Byzantinist who for the past thirty years has served as director (*ephor*) of Byzantine and post-Byzantine monuments, first in Kavala, then in Thessaloniki.

Nor do they disappoint: literally from first page to last, this work presents a variety of new materials, supported by equally new and often thought-provoking interpretations. Its most significant contribution is the focus it brings to bear on the important but largely ignored Byzantine monuments lining the Thracian banks of the Meriç (Evros) River from Edirne (Adrianople) to the port city of Enez (Ainos) on the north coast of the Aegean. In so doing it highlights the neglected reality that the primary transportation routes of the Balkans lay on a north-south bias, from the mountains (the word "Balkan" itself is a Turkish word for thickly wooded mountain range) down the river valleys to the sea.

This river and its immediate hinterland, which today mark the border separating Greece and Turkey, are home to a variety of unknown and/or understudied sites, which will finally, thanks to this book, receive the attention they deserve from scholars and the public.

The authors also note the manner in which, in the wake of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Greek and Turkish scholars have all too often focused only on their side of the border, ignoring the role of the Evros as a major transportation route serving Thrace throughout its history. As they point out, this waterway was, prior to the opening of the railway connecting Istanbul and Thessaloniki in the 1890s, the major transportation artery in Thrace. Along its course

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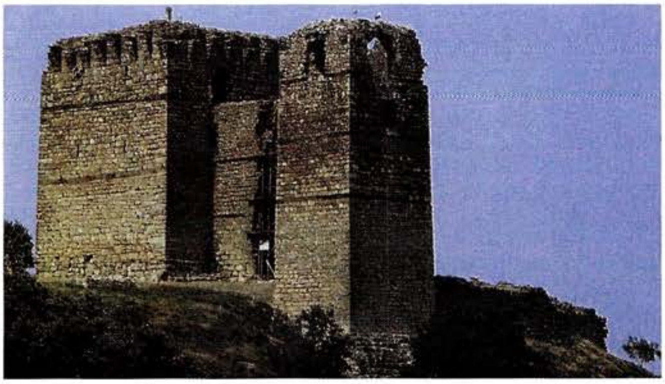
Elbistan cicim, wool on wool,
nineteenth century

BERRIN TOROLSAN © CORNUCOPIA

goods were shipped south from Filibe (Philippopolis; modern Plovdiv in Bulgaria), through Edirne to the Aegean. Then in 1923 its new status as a border dividing two embattled neighbours brought an end to its traditional role and virtually turned it into a no-man's-land. Thanks to Ousterhout and Bakirtzis we may now once again begin to see the Meriç/Evros River Valley as a whole.

For the Istanbul-reader based in Istanbul this book will provide a handy and invaluable handbook for travel in the region. Indeed, following the order in which it describes the monuments, one might literally visit each of the sites it covers in the course of a long weekend. Leaving from Istanbul, one's first stop would be Enez (Ainos), at the mouth of the river on the Turkish side of the border (reached via Tekirdağ and Keşan), where within the walls of the fortress lie the ruins of the twelfth-century Byzantine basilica now known as the Fatih Camii (after the fact that it served as the "Conqueror's Mosque" from the Ottoman conquest in 1456 until its dome collapsed after an earthquake in 1965). Retracing one's route to Keşan and then heading west to Ipsala one crosses into Greece and stops at Pherai (Ottoman: Ferecik) for a visit to the magnificent 12th-century church/monastery complex known as the Panagia Kosmosoteira. From there an hour's drive up the west bank of the river takes you to Didymoteicho (the Turkish Dimetoka), where one of several comfortable hotels will provide a deserved rest after a long day on the road.

The next morning one would set out to see the significant Byzantine remains of Didymoteicho, and then, after lunch, drive a few kilometers to what the authors describe as the fourteenth-century (built c1331 with "later additions") ruined fortress of Pythion and the nearby village of Prangi, which house the ruins of a thirteenth-century Byzantine church and two nearby chapels.



THE KEEP AT PYTHION. THE RIGHT-HAND TOWER, BUILT IN 1360, IS POSSIBLY THE OLDEST OTTOMAN FORTRESS IN EXISTENCE

It is at this stage of the trip, however, that I find myself in less than complete accord with the authors: specifically their failure to address the possibility that the second phase of the Pythion fortress complex (which they and other specialists all acknowledge was added later) may well be an Ottoman addition, dating from the early 1360s. Bearing in mind Ousterhout and Bakirtzis accept the dendrochronology-supported date of c1331 for the construction of the larger of the two standing towers, then go on to state that "the smaller tower and the arched gateway were constructed later, simultaneously with the wall of the inner enceinte", and also acknowledge that the complex was taken by the early Ottoman March Lord Hacı Ilbeğ "around 1359", the obvious question that comes to mind is: why were the later additions made and by whom and when? If in fact the later additions are Byzantine (as our authors seem to agree) they were built in a very narrow window between c1331 and c1359. It seems equally possible (indeed probable), that the second phase of the Pythion fortress's construction was undertaken by its Ottoman conqueror, Hacı Ilbeğ, prior to his death in the mid-1360s. This would account for the fact that in all Ottoman sources the fortress was subsequently known by some variant of his name – most commonly as Hacı Ilbeğ Kulesi (Hacı Ilbeğ's Tower). As students of Ottoman history know, the presence of such a name is usually a sign that the person so addressed was responsible for a monument's building – the Ottomans were not prone to rename the existing sites they took. It would be a rare occurrence for a pre-existing site to be named in honour of its conqueror – in fact, no such example comes to mind.

The dating of these later additions might be a moot point had Kuniholm and Striker (the dendrochronologists responsible for taking the dated samples from the older tower) used wood from the later additions (the lack of access at the time of their 1978 visit prohibited this possibility). You might well ask: "Why all the fuss? Isn't this just scholarly nitpicking?" The answer is: if the dating I suggest is correct, it would make the Pythion fortress the earliest known Ottoman fortification, predating Anadolu Hisarı on the Asian side of the Bosphorus by close to half a century.

My second, albeit minor, point of disagreement with Ousterhout and Bakirtzis stems from their identification of the site of the present-day village of Prangi with Evrenos, home of the father of the early Ottoman conqueror of most of western Thrace and Macedonia. Contra their assertion, there simply is no way to equate the village of Prangi (almost certainly a corruption of Frangi, or Frenk, ie Western European), mentioned in 16th-century Ottoman cadastral surveys as the location of the tomb of Evrenos's father, a certain Prangi Îsâ Bey, with the village lying halfway between Didymoteicho and the Pythion fortress. To attempt such a linkage is unsustainable: there are several sites in the Balkans bearing this name, and there can be no doubt that Prangi Îsâ Bey's *türbe* (tomb) is located in the Bulgarian village of Hırçova (also known as Prangi) in the sub-district of Koniçe in the *kaza* (administrative district) of Ustrumca, as we have a variety of 16th-century documents placing it there.

This minor error in identification notwithstanding, the Didymoteichon village of Prangi is still well worth a stop for the Byzantine remains it preserves. It also has a late-19th-century Ottoman train station, transformed into an excellent country restaurant where one may have a late lunch before proceeding north to the border crossing of Kapıkule and back into Turkey for the final stop at Edirne.

After a couple of hours' stopover to visit what little remains of the medieval fortifications, specifically the so-called Macedonian Tower, one returns to Istanbul, having toured the Evros valley in the company of those who know it best. One can only hope this little book is the forerunner of a series of similar studies on other overlooked and understudied regions and their Byzantine monuments. I for one will never visit Thrace again unaccompanied by Robert Ousterhout and Charalambos Bakirtzis.

Heath Lowry is Atatürk Professor of Ottoman and Modern Turkish Studies at Princeton University. His latest book, *The Shaping of the Ottoman Balkans, 1350–1550: The Conquest, Settlement and Infrastructural Development of Northern Greece* (Bahçeşehir University Press), is available from www.cornucopia.net

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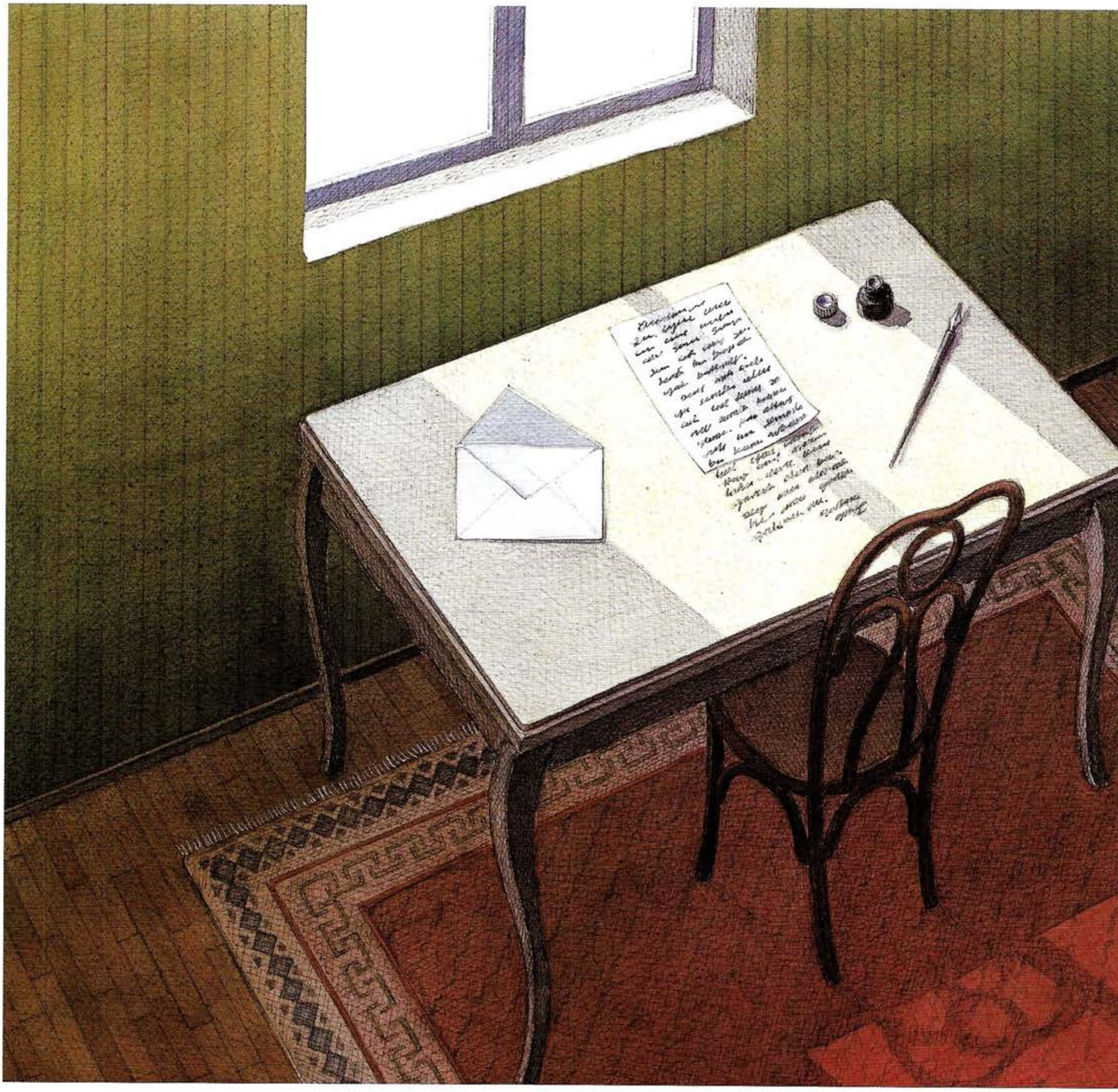
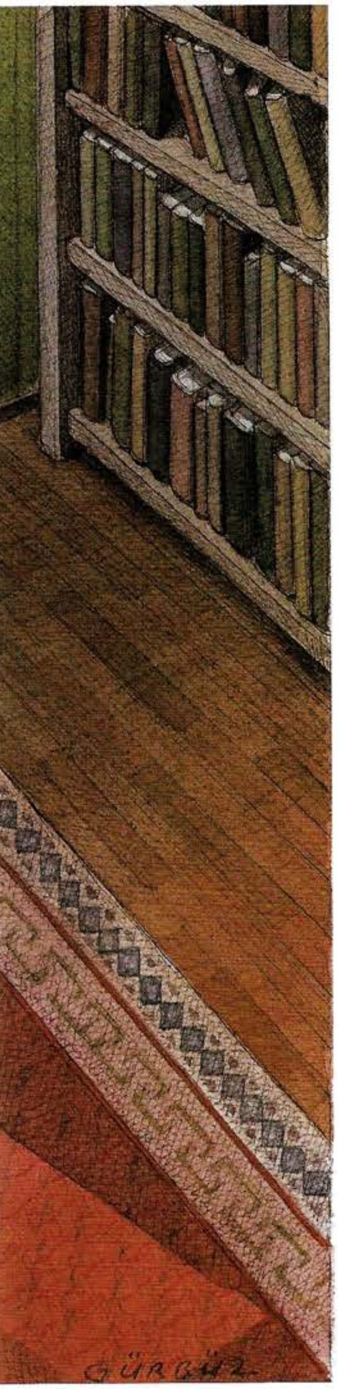
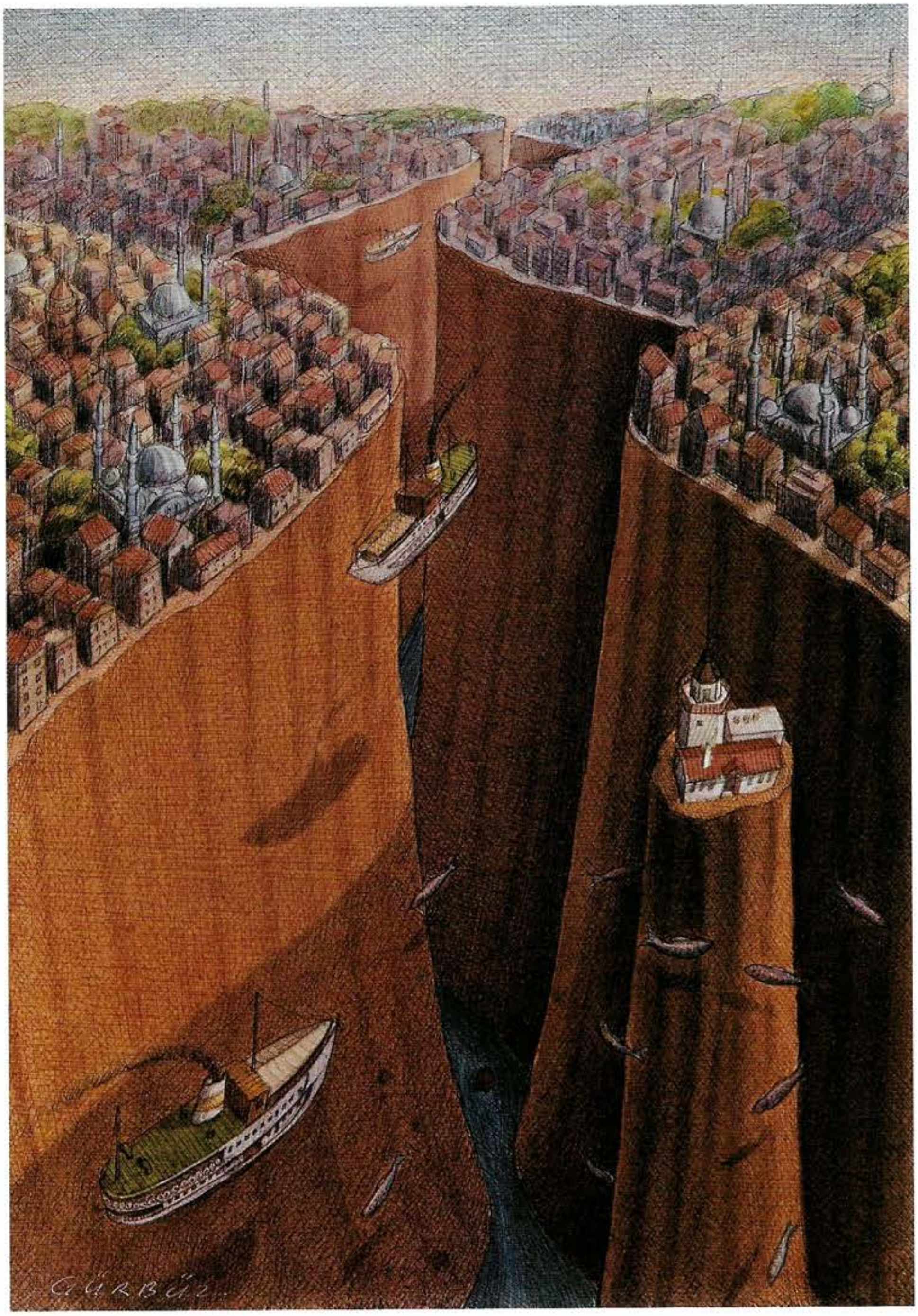


It's a wonderfully weird world

GÜRBÜZ DOĞAN EKŞIĞOLU'S WIT AND GRAPHIC SENSIBILITY WON OVER THE BIG APPLE WHEN HIS CARTOON WAS CHOSEN FOR THE COVER OF THE NEW YORKER ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11. YET HE HAS ONLY SPENT A MONTH IN THEIR CITY, WITHOUT TIME EVEN TO VISIT THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING. BUT IRONY IS CENTRAL TO HIS LIFE AS WELL AS HIS ART, ANDREW FINKEL DISCOVERS

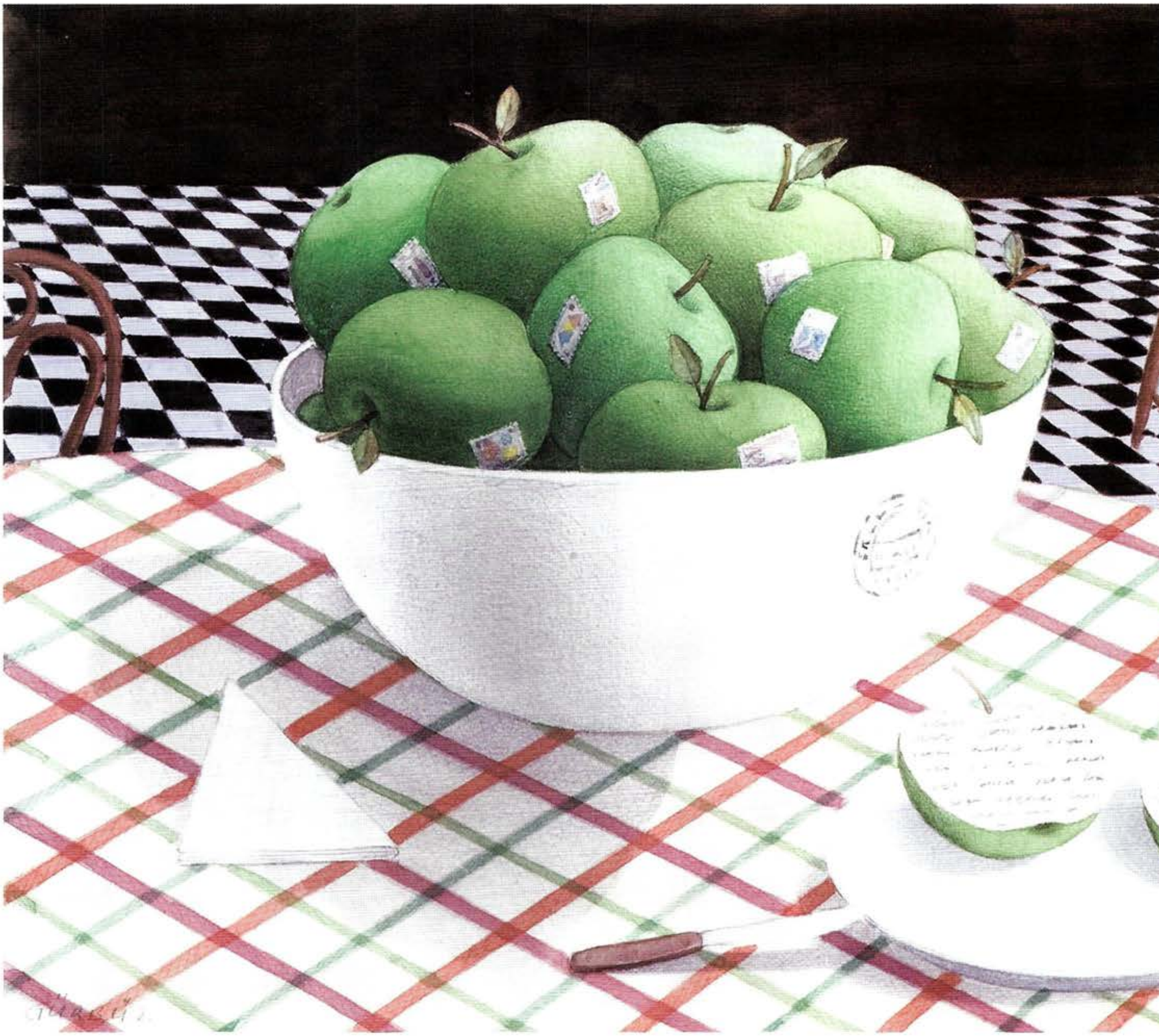
Eye of Charles Addams, toe of Saul Steinberg. Throw in Dorothy Parker's sting. Somewhere in the bowels of the Algonquin Hotel, there is a coven of wizened bellhops conjuring up the most urbane, the most understated, the most slyly sophisticated cover artist for *The New Yorker* magazine. Even they would be





surprised to see Gürbüz Doğan Ekşioğlu pop out of the cauldron. He really doesn't fit the stereotype. The only East Side he hails from is Eastern Turkish Black Sea coast, and far from being voted Talk of the Town, he only managed to scrape into the agriculture department of Erzurum University after repeating a few grades at school. While his ability to network at Manhattan dinner parties is shackled by an almost defiant inability to learn English, he does have one or two things working to his advantage. He is an incredible draftsman and appears to have one of those effortlessly surreal views of the universe that inspires even the most been-there-did-that New Yorker to do a surprised double take.

Gürbüz Doğan Ekşioğlu wasn't responsible for the now celebrated *New Yorker* cover that appeared in the wake of 9/11 2001 – the black-on-black silhouette of two tall buildings, one of whose spire's slices the W of the magazine's name. Yet a drawing he made at the time did appear as the cover to mark the second anniversary of that devastating event. It was a gentler, and in its way uplifting,

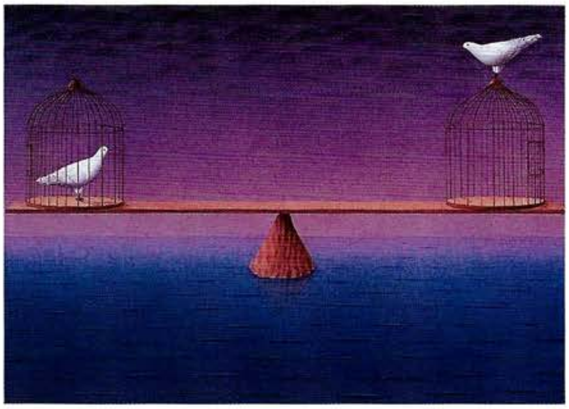


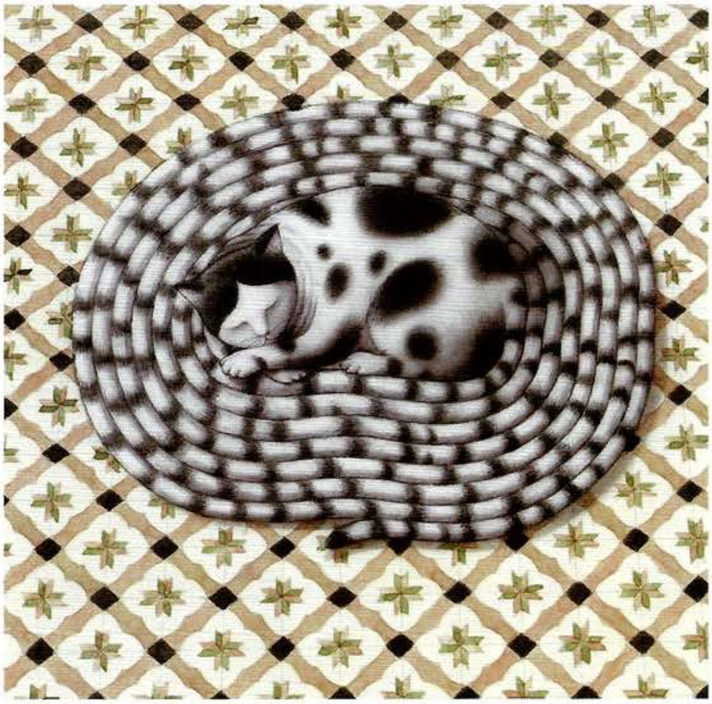
comment on the attack. It depicted a Manhattan skyline where every building has its twin, with each twin reflected in the dark autumn colours of the water offshore.

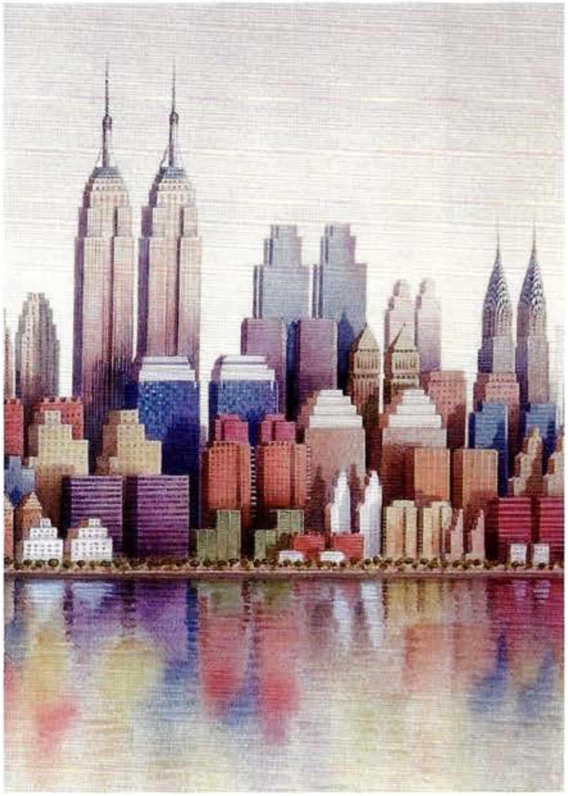
Dedication, a lot of hard work and never wavering from the thing he did best is the answer to the obvious question of how a small-town boy made it in the Big Apple. If Ekşioğlu was never the model student it's because he spent all his time at the drawing board, eventually re-applying to university and winning a place to study graphic design. Having fought so hard to get into academe, that is where he has remained. He took a cut in salary to quit a job in advertising and take up a position in the applied arts academy where he himself graduated.

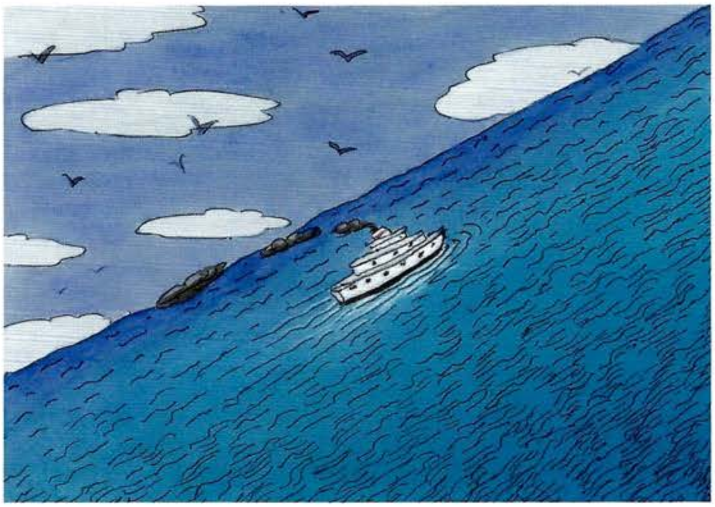
As a student he had begun entering prizes for graphics and influenced by the great Turkish cartoonist Ali Ulvi Ersoy (1924–98), and won first prize in a 1984 caricature contest for his depiction of a dove carrying not just a branch but the whole olive tree. The judges of one of the contests he entered was the legendary graphic designer Milton ("I♥NY") Glaser, who pointed him in the right direction. Ekşioğlu's portfolio caught the attention of the *New York Times* op-ed page (his first commission was for an article about the line between physics and metaphysics and a showed a teacher drawing on a blackboard that was really the sky). Requests from *Forbes* and *The Atlantic* followed. At a meeting at one Condé Nast publication he was told that his homespun Magritte style made him perfect for *The New Yorker*. This was back in 1991 and the question was what to draw. He sat down and figured that even the edgiest New Yorker had a weak spot for cats.

"I never did make it to the Empire









State Building," he says about a trip to New York that lasted only a month. The work was pouring in and he was earning in a month his annual university salary. He was tempted to stay, but family obligations drew him back to Turkey. And he was never comfortable in a language that was not his own, even though his drawing spoke straight to the most cosmopolitan of sensitivities. His "Twin Towers" made it to the cover of New York's literary bible on what has become that city's holiest day. His homecoming was not without problems. He can't get promoted to full professor. "The regulations say you need to know English," he said.

So does he regret not having pursued a more international career? He answers by thumbing through a book of his own drawings to a particular page. The picture shows a dove on a cage balanced at the other end of a fulcrum by a dove in a cage. If the free bird flies away, the other bird will drown in the water below. ◆

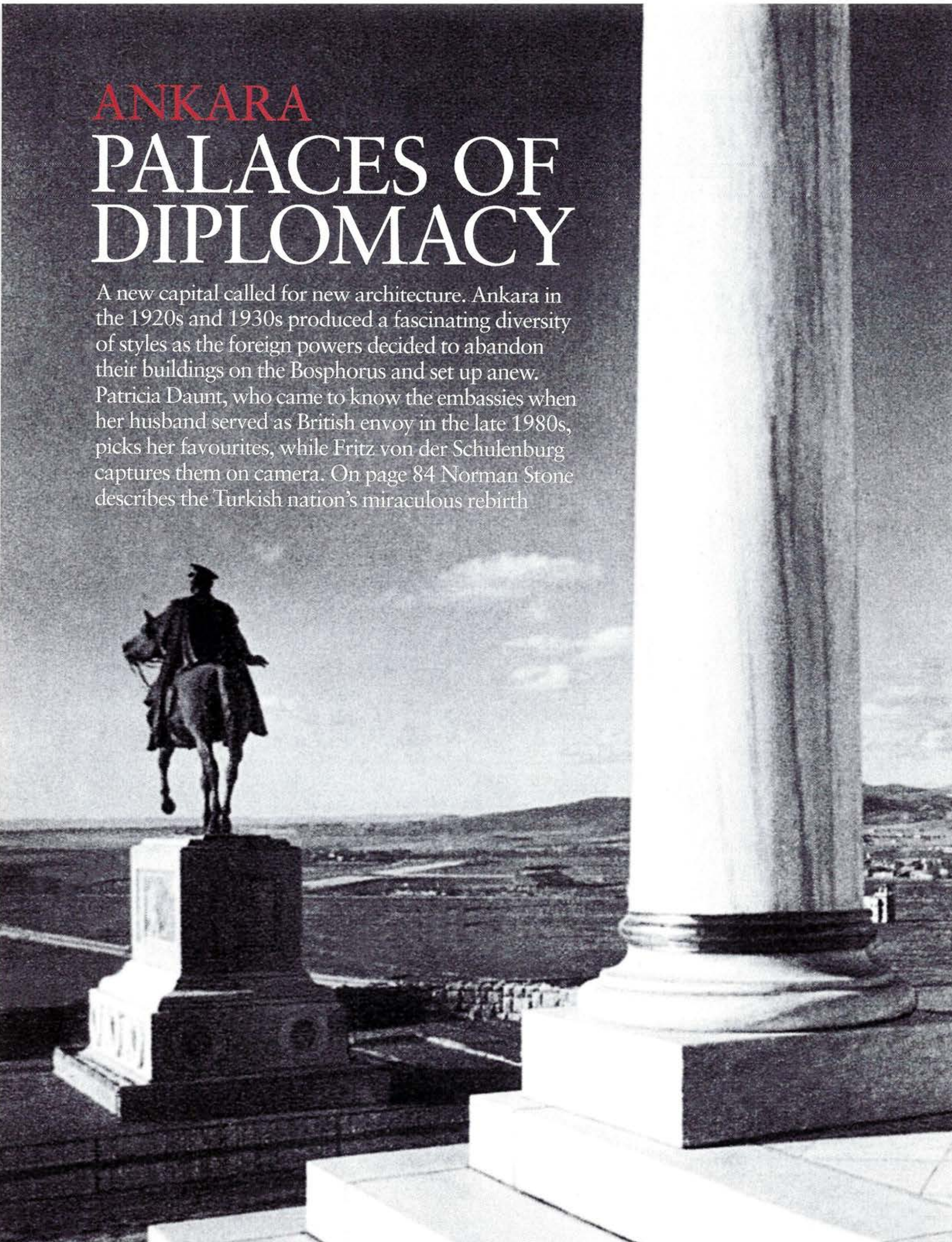
Gürbüz Doğan Ekşioğlu's website is at www.gurbuz-de.com. For a good cross-section of his work, see the catalogue of his recent show at Istanbul's Milli Reasurans Art Gallery (February 2008): from www.cornucopia.net.

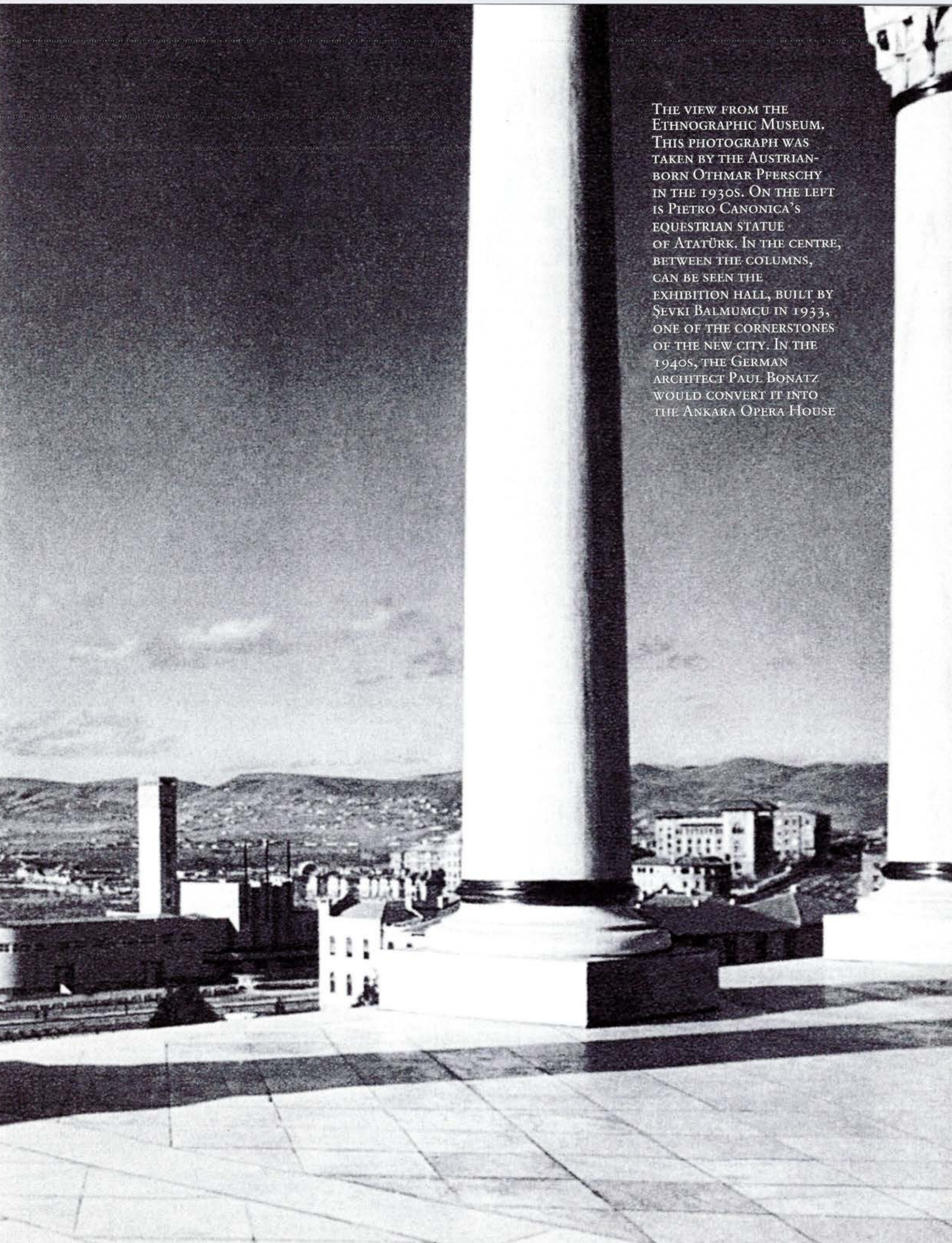
Two decades of Gürbüz, who never titles his paintings, preferring to leave that to the viewer. Previous pages: 'The letter' (left), commissioned by the Macedonian Post Office; 'The straits' (right) was for an extract from Orhan Pamuk's *Black Book* in the German magazine, *Merian*. Opposite: 'apple-post' – Gürbüz has a Magritte-like attention to detail. Top left: 'doves in balancing act' depicts the dilemma of Gürbüz's life. Above left: his 'Twin Towers', *The New Yorker*'s cover on the second anniversary of 9/11. Top right: 'feline peace': a cover for Istanbul's *Mediacat* magazine. Above: 'a steep sea'

ANKARA

PALACES OF DIPLOMACY

A new capital called for new architecture. Ankara in the 1920s and 1930s produced a fascinating diversity of styles as the foreign powers decided to abandon their buildings on the Bosphorus and set up anew. Patricia Daunt, who came to know the embassies when her husband served as British envoy in the late 1980s, picks her favourites, while Fritz von der Schulenburg captures them on camera. On page 84 Norman Stone describes the Turkish nation's miraculous rebirth



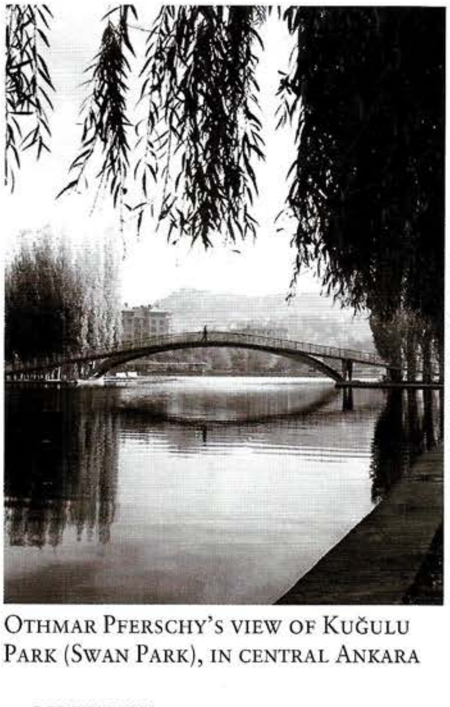


The view from the Ethnographic Museum. This photograph was taken by the Austrian-born Othmar Pferschy in the 1930s. On the left is Pietro Canonica's equestrian statue of Atatürk. In the centre, between the columns, can be seen the exhibition hall, built by Şevki Balmumcu in 1933, one of the cornerstones of the new city. In the 1940s, the German architect Paul Bonatz would convert it into the Ankara Opera House

ATATÜRK'S ANKARA

HOW THE DIPLOMATIC WORLD DRAGGED ITSELF AWAY FROM ISTANBUL AND SETTLED IN THE NEW CAPITAL

BY PATRICIA DAUNT



OTHMAR PFERSCHY'S VIEW OF KUĞULU PARK (SWAN PARK), IN CENTRAL ANKARA

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF ISTANBUL MODERN ART MUSEUM

Atatürk showed himself to be an iconoclast and an innovator in switching his capital from Istanbul to Ankara. In this, as in much else, Mustafa Kemal's bold action was eventually emulated, by Australia, Brazil and Pakistan, among others. A spate of new public buildings resulted – the Grand National Assembly, the ministries, the presidential palace itself – that remain as monuments to late-1920s and 1930s taste. So, too, in their more individualistic ways, do the principal embassy buildings of the period.

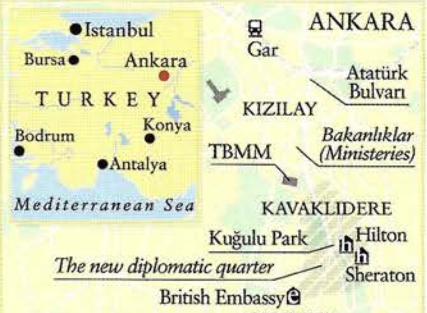
In 1919 Mustafa Kemal's Nationalists moved their headquarters to the old farm school in Keçiören, on the outskirts of Ankara – or Angora as it had been known since classical times – from Sivas, a day's journey to the east. Ankara, an important trading post in Hittite times, was then just a small town in Anatolia, 300 miles from Istanbul. Although the Baghdad railway had reached there as early as 1893, it had only intermittent contact with the outside world. Its sense of isolation had been exacerbated by a fire during the First World War which had destroyed swathes of the old lath-and-plaster houses that lined the steep cobbled streets huddled about the citadel.

The arrival of the Nationalists did little to change the physical aspect of Ankara while Anatolia remained in the grip of civil war and invasion that followed the First World War. But on March 18, 1920, the last Ottoman sultan, Mehmed VI Vahdettin, definitively adjourned parliament in Istanbul. The way was open for a legitimate provisional Turkish national assembly to open a month later in Ankara. Mustafa Kemal was elected its president. While operational headquarters remained in the old farm school on Ankara's outskirts, he and his inner circle appropriated the stationmaster's house, below Ulus, Ankara's market area, built up among the extensive ruins of the Roman provincial capital of Galacia.

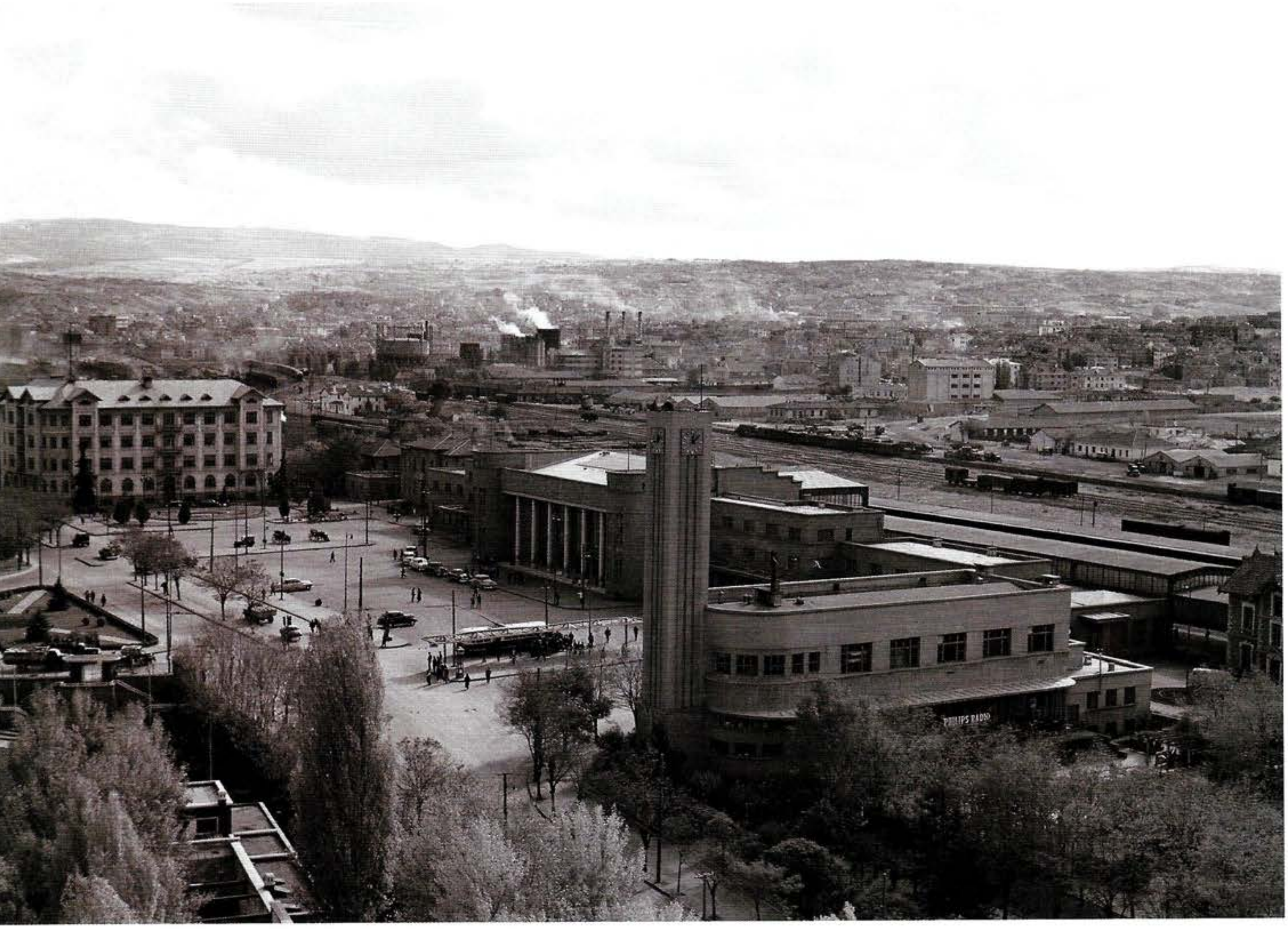
Few, if any, recall rural Ankara as it was eighty-eight years ago – snowbound in winter, sun-baked in summer and at other seasons a muddy morass. During the summer of 1921, the strains of war against the Greeks, compounded by malarial fever, drove Mustafa Kemal and his entourage into the hilly district some six kilometres southeast of Ulus, already known as Çankaya. There he took over the best of the agreeable timber-framed merchants' summer houses standing among vineyards and orchards and directed the final stages of the war which cleared the Greek invaders from Anatolia and decisively weakened the hold of the Allies in Istanbul and elsewhere.

The Sultan had already fled his dead empire aboard a British warship when the victory of Turkish resistance received international recognition at Lausanne two years later. On July 24, 1923, the Treaty of Lausanne, with annexes detailed almost to absurdity, was ratified by the Allies "in a brightly caparisoned Swiss University hall". "None of us can pretend that it is a glorious instrument," the British High Commissioner wrote of the treaty to his deputy in Istanbul. He likened Mustafa Kemal to "a boxer who, after being counted out, had risen from the ring, stunned his opponent and knocked the referee through the ropes before making off with the prize money".

The triumphant Turks proclaimed Ankara their capital on October 23, 1923. A circular to diplomatic missions was then issued: "The Angora Government would like to see the Diplomatic Missions there too. They should choose sites on which to build and the Government would be happy to make these sites available to their Governments." The new regime envisaged a diplomatic quarter, offering small sites off a track which was to become Atatürk Bulvarı



SUSANNA HICKLING

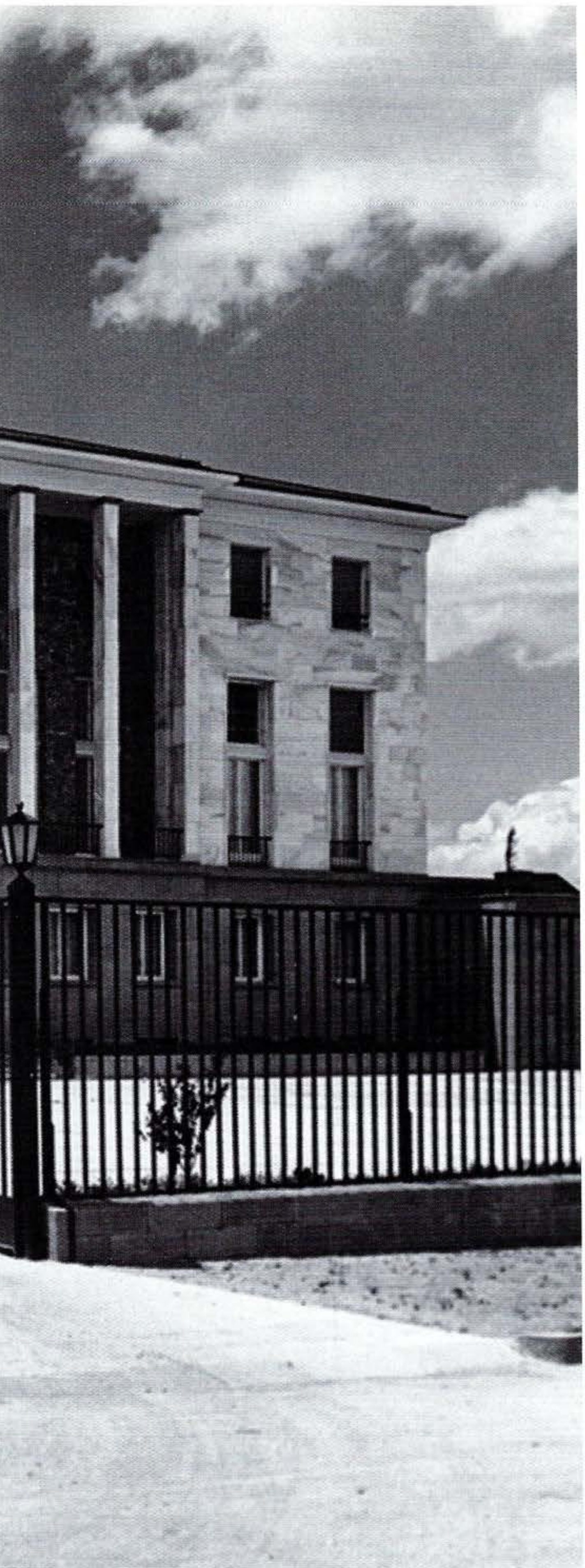


(Atatürk Boulevard), cutting through orchards and agricultural land from the new ministries area, soon known as Bakanlıklar, to Çankaya.

This should not have been the shock it was to the representatives of the Great Powers in their palaces at Beyoğlu and on the Bosphorus. A capital away from indefensible Istanbul had been advocated as long ago as 1898 by Sultan Abdülhamid's German adviser, Goltz Pasha. Sooner or later the embassies were to be weaned away from the fleshpots of Istanbul to Ankara – "a place where diplomats were not alone in being disconcerted by its primitive character" – by the need to transact business with the new government. That government stubbornly refused to transact it anywhere but in Ankara, where it offered the inducement of land to build on for those who would come.

Come they eventually did: first the Soviets and the Afghans, in the aftermath of their support for the Nationalists in the War of Independence; then the Americans, aloof from the occupying powers of 1918; then the French, who soon saw the way the wind was blowing after 1923; and, in due course, the British, obliged to negotiate the future of northern Iraq. And so they acquired sites, and then they built – some accepting plots in the "diplomatic quarter" and buying additional land to accommodate housing and offices; others buying sites elsewhere which they thought better suited to their needs. And most built prestigiously and well – monuments to the status and taste of their individual nations – during the late 1920s and 1930s.

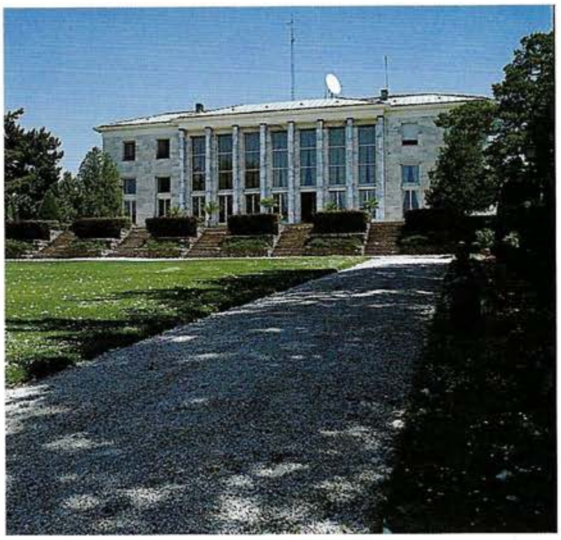
ABOVE: ANKARA'S RAILWAY STATION IN THE BOOMING 1930S, PHOTOGRAPHED BY OTHMAR PFERSCHY. SEVERAL MISSIONS LIVED FOR YEARS IN RAILWAY CARRIAGES. IN 1923 THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT OFFERED FREE BUILDING LOTS TO 21 COUNTRIES. SO LONG AS THE EMBASSY BUILDINGS WERE FINISHED WITHIN THE YEAR, ALL NECESSARY MATERIALS FOR THEIR CONSTRUCTION COULD BE IMPORTED TAX-FREE



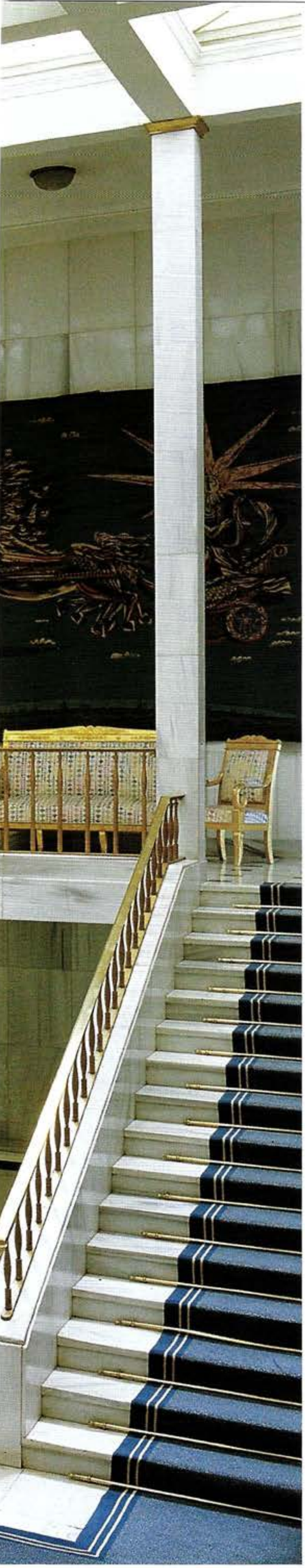
AMBASSADE DE FRANCE EN TURQUIE

THE FRENCH EMBASSY

MONUMENTAL MODERNISM



LEFT: THE MARBLE-CLAD EASTERN FAÇADE OF ALBERT LAPRADE'S MODERNIST PALAIS AS IT WAS IN THE 1930S, AUSTERE IN EVERYTHING BUT THE MATERIALS. TOP: THE GARDEN FAÇADE. LAPRADE CONCEIVED THE BUILDING AS A MODERN TAKE ON VERSAILLES'S PETIT TRIANON. ABOVE: THE SCROLLS OF THE WROUGHT-IRON GATES OFFSET THE BUILDING'S RAZOR-EDGE GEOMETRY



When a new French ambassador to Turkey was appointed in 1928, the Quai d'Orsay instructed him in no uncertain terms to "steer clear of the fleshpots on the Bosphorus". As Ankara was where dealing with those who governed Turkey was now done, he was to "live there by choice". "It is not the end of the world."

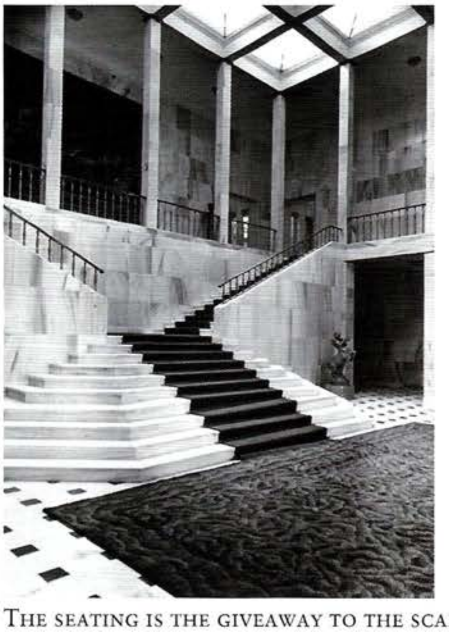
A small mission had been established in Ankara since 1923, administered by a succession of chargés d'affaires who complained bitterly of the "abominable" dust and water shortages. But the ambassadors themselves resided in the Palais de France in Istanbul, taking the fifteen-hour train journey to Ankara only to present their credentials and attend the annual Republic Day ball.

France's principal concern in 1928 was the governance of the League-of-Nations-mandated Sanjak of Alexandretta – today's province of Hatay – which Mustafa Kemal was keen to acquire. There was a need for a resident ambassador in Ankara: Charles de Chambrun was appointed that year.

The Turkish government duly honoured the 1923 promise of a site: a parcel of uncultivated land behind the Italians and Germans, away from the mud, dust and ruts of Atatürk Boulevard. But it was too small. Fortunately, the following year, contiguous terrain, more rock than earth, belonging to the celebrated author Yakup Kadri came on the market. Its purchase enabled building plans to be made. While the two responsible departments in Paris, the Beaux Arts and the foreign ministry, quarrelled for the next eight years over the designing and funding of the new building, a temporary chancery was opened in a French religious order's old house in Ulus, and a villa was rented for the ambassador in the new residential quarter of Yenişehir.

Four years elapsed before France's chief government architect, Albert Laprade, visited Ankara to assess the possibilities of the site. In September 1934 his plans were approved. Fresh from the success of his widely acclaimed modernist Musée des Colonies in Paris, Laprade was France's best choice to design an embassy that would reflect "Greater France" in the new capital, bristling with classical modernist architecture. For the next three years, when not coercing the engineers, technicians and interior designers responsible for the details of the project, he was dealing with the petty jealousies and intrigues of the bureaucrats and the demands of four successive ambassadors.

For all that, the main work on the building, a rigorously symmetrical rectangle, its austerity somewhat offset by the quality of the building materials, was complete enough for embassy

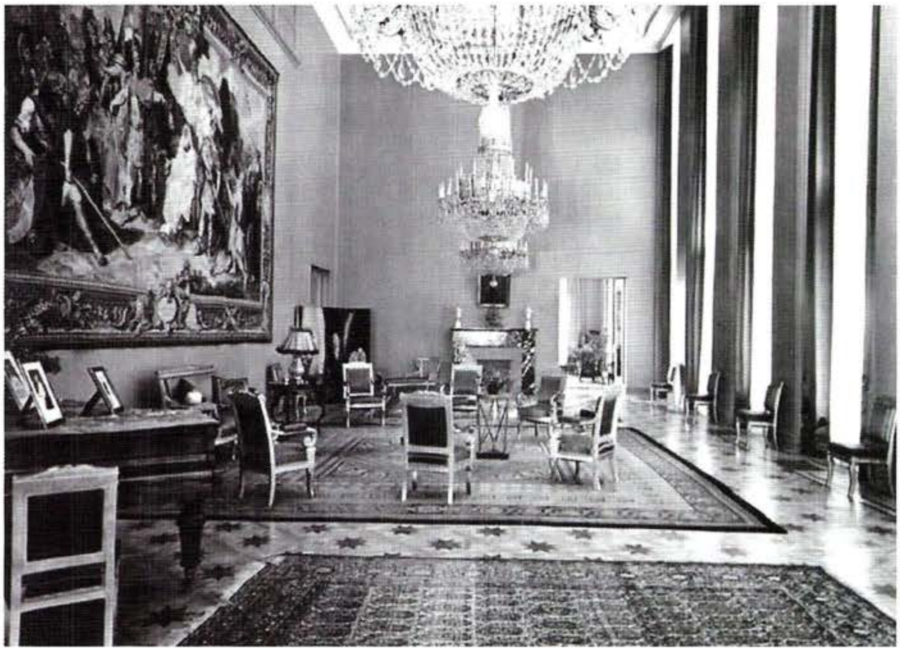


AMBASSADE DE FRANCE EN TURQUIE

The seating is the giveaway to the scale of the light-flooded atrium, with its marble walls, slender pillars and theatrical staircase. 'Les Cyclistes' by Latapie (1954) and other 20th-century Gobelin tapestries bring a dash of colour staff to move in by the autumn of 1937. The fitting-out of the interior took longer, but new funds were allocated in 1939 – there was a need for additional buildings for counsellors, attachés and garages – and more funds arrived for the garden and a reservoir before France fell in 1940.

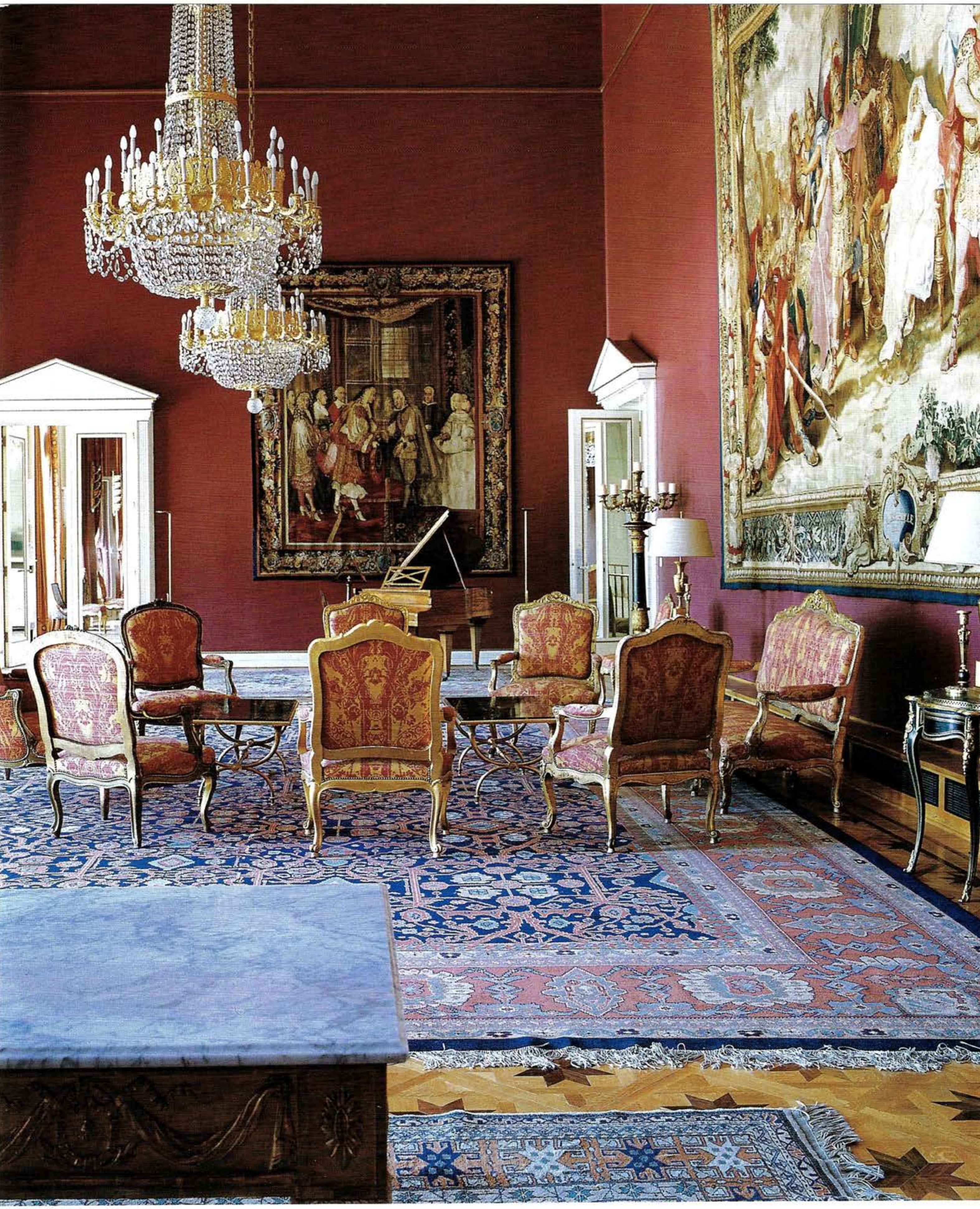
If this grand, spare *hôtel,* which embraces under one roof offices, public rooms and the ambassador's private apartment, is a celebration of French modernism, its fine wrought-iron gates, flanked by a pair of pavilions in the forecourt, the red and white marble facings of the façades and the levelling of the land below the western terrace evoke the Petit Trianon of Versailles.

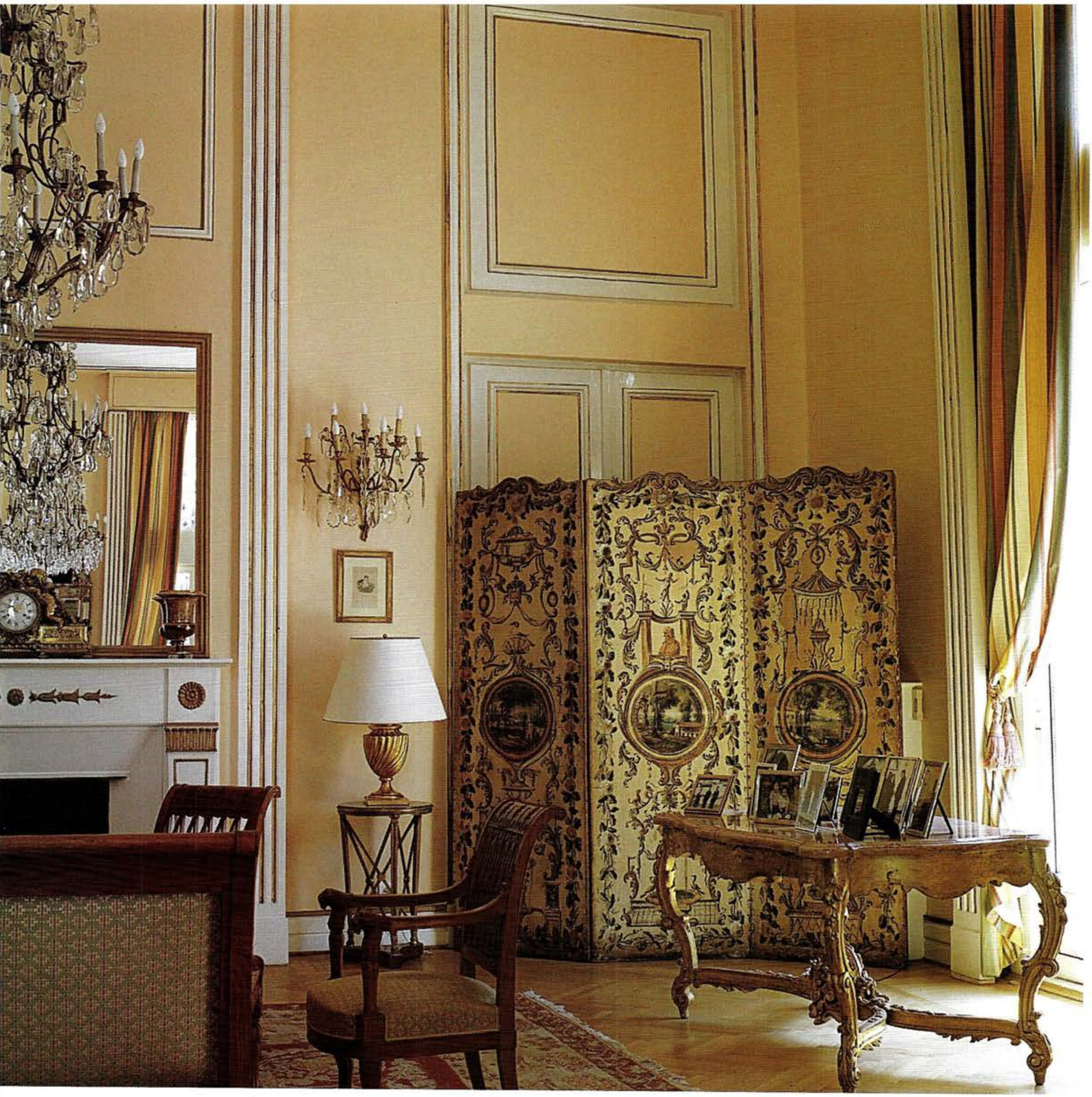
Some see a striking resemblance to Laprade's Musée des Colonies, others to the governor's residence in Rabat and the Villa Tyng in Marrakesh. For Ankara denizens, the landscaping of the land from bedrock to formal park in the style of Le Nôtre is probably Laprade's crowning achievement. Connoisseurs



AMBASSADE DE FRANCE EN TURQUIE

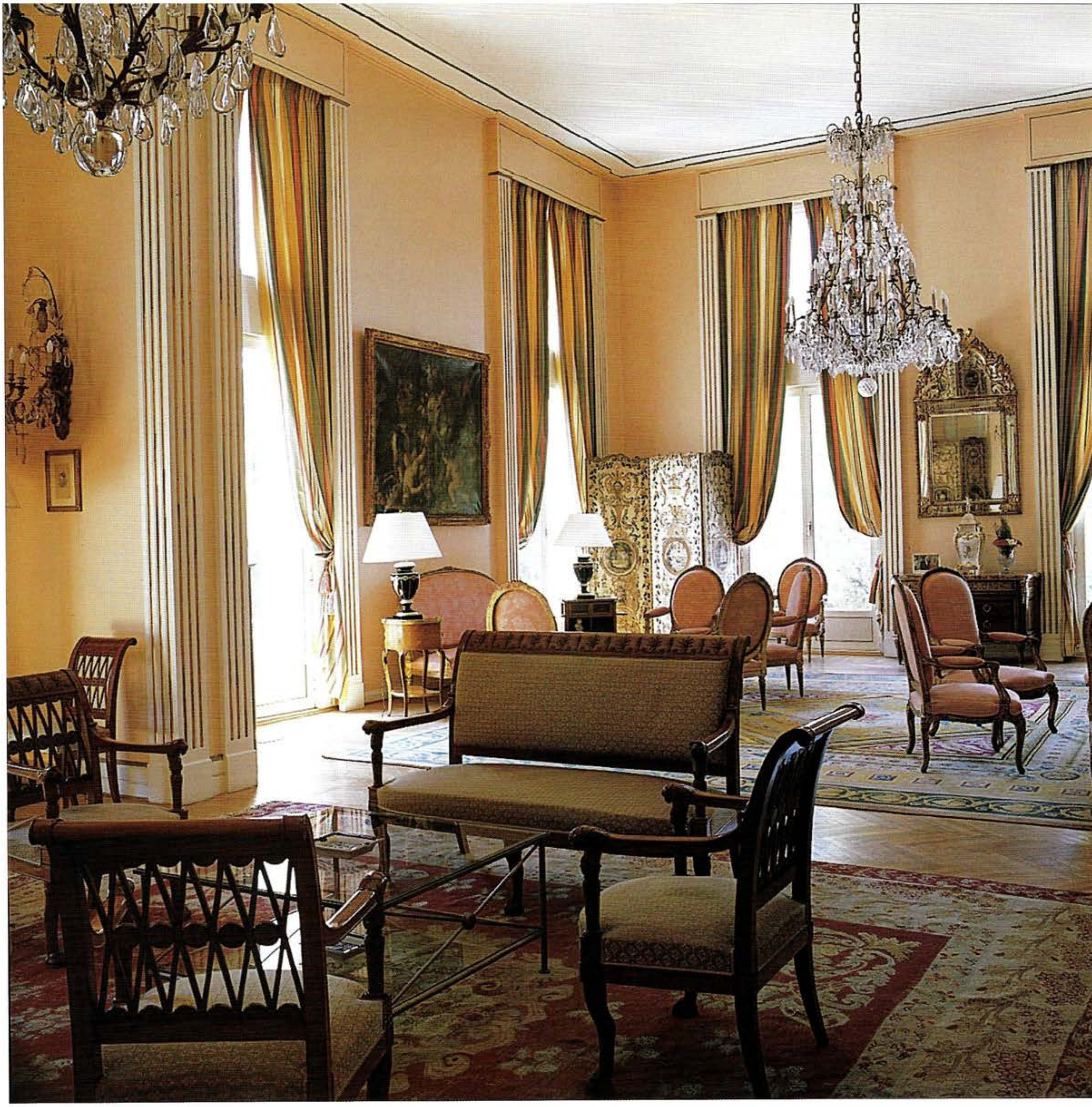
THE SALON DES FÊTES IN 1938 (TOP) AND TODAY (RIGHT) IS USED FOR RECEPTIONS IN WINTER. TRADITIONAL RATHER THAN MODERNIST, IT HAS LOUIS XV FURNITURE AND EARLY-19TH-CENTURY CHANDELIERS. THE LE BRUN TAPESTRY OVER THE PLEYEL PIANO DEPICTS LOUIS XIV'S MEETING WITH PHILIP IV OF SPAIN. ABOVE: GUESTS IN 1938





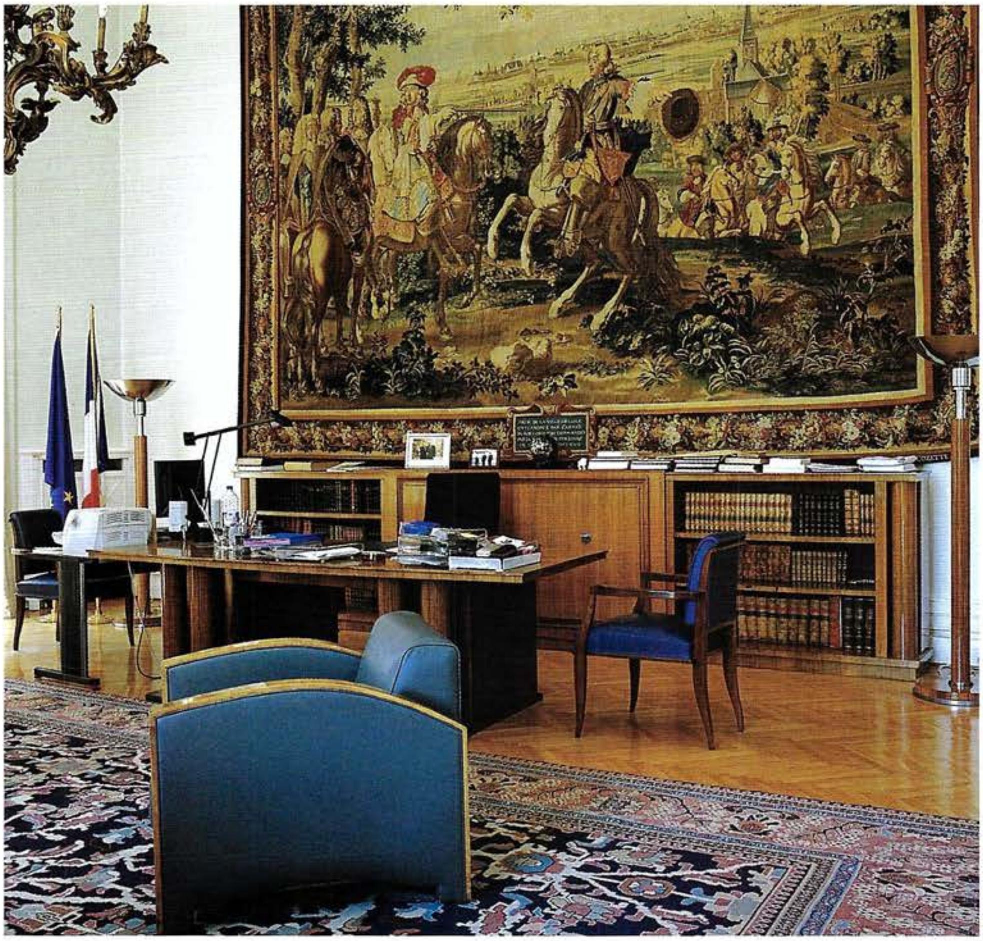
of French modernist furniture see Jean Dunand's black-lacquer panel for the dining room and Jules Leleu's set of desk and chairs for the ambassador's study as major works of their genre.

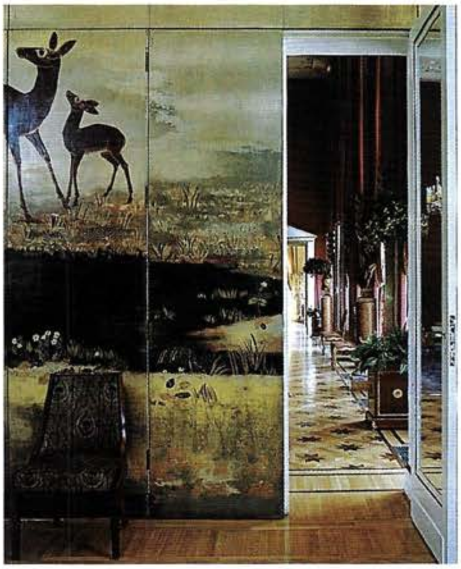
The Second World War put paid to the final touches of Laprade's grand design. The last of the pre-war funds received from Paris in 1940 was for a reservoir to tap water from a spring deep in the rock (this is still the ambassador's swimming pool and never warms up). Nevertheless it retains the unique style of 1930s French architectural achievement. All the postwar ambassadors have left their stamp on the house, including the present envoy, who rightly sees the peerless beauty of the set of tapestries adorning the grand salon as the link that blends and holds together this rare assembly of furniture and furnishings in an important house that retains much that the 1930s stood for.

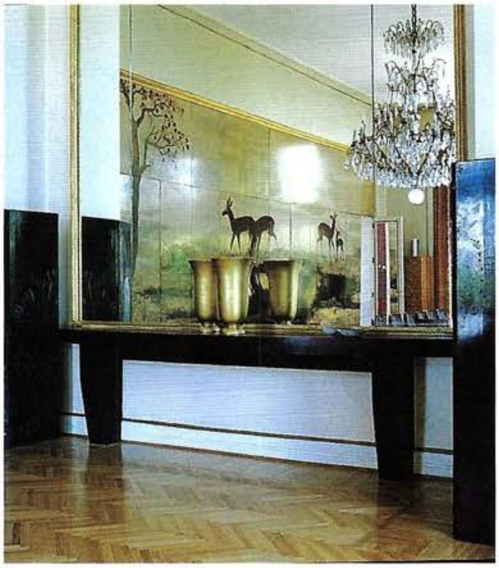


OPPOSITE AND ABOVE: AS TRADITION DEMANDS, GUESTS ARE STILL RECEIVED IN THE PETIT SALON, WHOSE DOORS OPEN ONTO THE GARDEN TERRACE. ART DECO FURNITURE WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED, AS IN THE AMBASSADOR'S OFFICE ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES, BUT WITH THE APPROACH OF WAR IN 1938, BUDGETS WERE CUT, AND THE EMBASSY HAD TO MAKE DO WITH OLD LOUIS XV AND LOUIS XVI ARMCHAIRS AND SÈVRES VASES.

LEFT: A SAVONNERIE CARPET RESTORED IN ANKARA IN THE LATE 1980S – THE INVOICE FOR THE WORK DESCRIBED IT AS 'THE FRENCH KILIM'







Top and right: a Gobelin tapestry of Louis XIV's capture of Lille, after Le Brun, woven in 1737–40, presides over the ambassador's Jules Leleu desk and chairs, the only set of contemporary furniture the foreign ministry could afford as war approached. The carpet, a replica of the original Uşak, was woven in Ankara in 1988 for the then envoy, Philippe Louet, and his wife, Penelope, whose initials were unexpectedly added by the weavers.
Above, left and right: the Art Deco designer Jean Dunand's 10-metre-long lacqueur mural of a herd of hinds, made up of 39 panels, is dated 1938

The British Embassy is a charmingly English house in a lushly haphazard English garden, once an orchard of apricot, almond, quince, apple and walnut trees. The weeping willow was planted by the Queen in 1971. The huge apricot tree on the right was already there when the embassy was built. Among the attractions of the site were its numerous springs

THE BRITISH EMBASSY

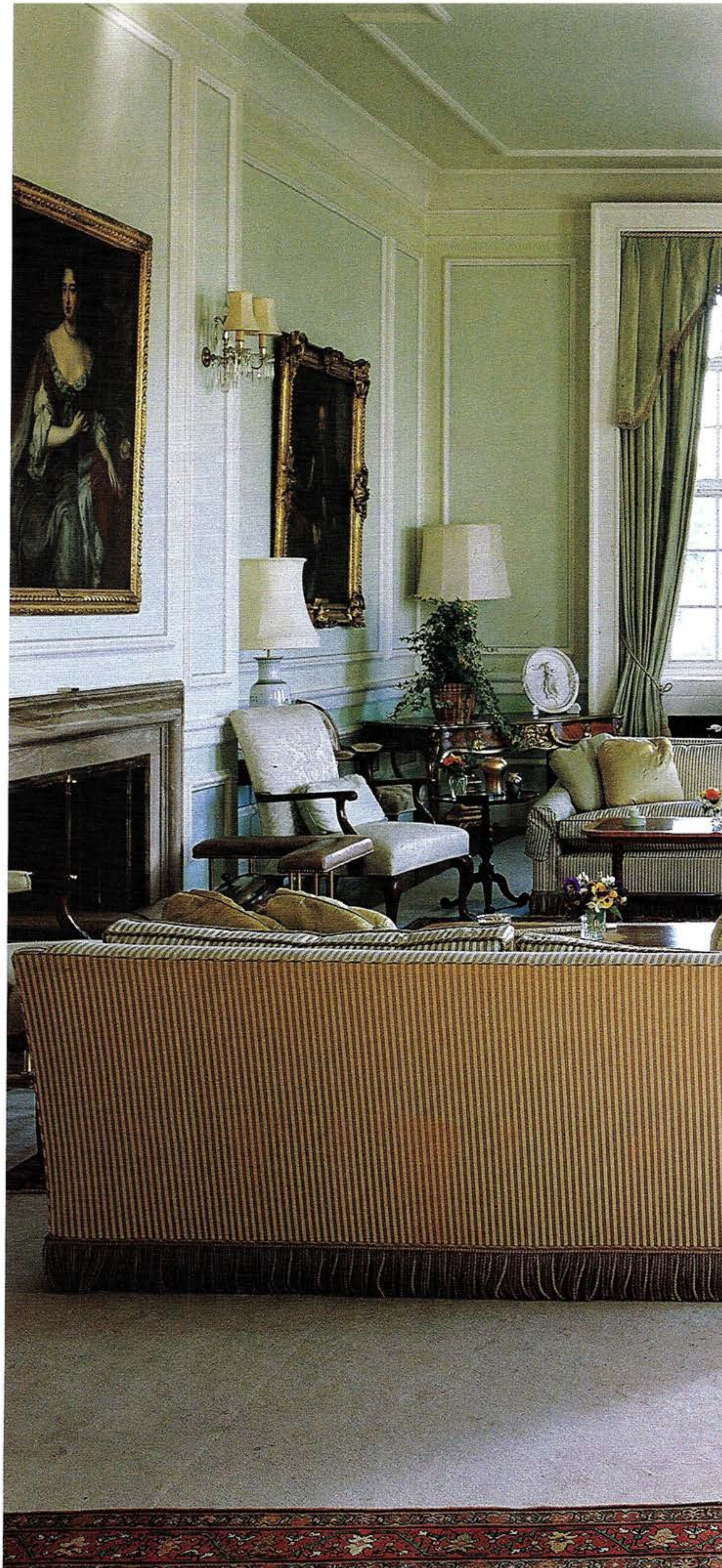
A DELIGHTFULLY ENGLISH HOUSE

'The walk up to the British Embassy: a lovely valley full of butterflies, wild crocuses and tortoises. From the Chancery windows coveys of partridge. Winter evenings saw thousands of geese and duck flighting into Lake Gölbaşı. Wolves roamed Çankaya when under snow. Cartridges ranked next to tyres on the black market for Sunday shooting'

"The site chose itself," wrote Alexander Knox-Helm, the young embassy secretary who found the future British Embassy on January 13, 1926. It was then "an old wooden house standing alone within a few acres of bare hillside". He could not have foreseen that he would himself be British ambassador at Ankara twenty-five years later and in the intervening years would be responsible for the purchase of the land alongside on which the present chancery and residence are sited.

In the aftermath of the First World War there was little love lost between Britain and the Turkish Nationalists, and the British had no intention of being inveigled away from Istanbul. The first postwar ambassador allowed thirteen months to elapse before arrangements were made to present his credentials in Ankara. Two railway carriages were hired for the week away. When the British party arrived in a station siding below Ulus on March 1, 1925, they were surprised to find the French ambassador alongside them in a sleeper-coach hired for the same purpose.

With negotiations over northern Iraq – a leftover from the Lausanne Peace Conference – due to resume in Ankara in May 1926, Knox-Helm was despatched to the capital in mid-January – together with a local representative in the Office of Works – to find a suitable site. The pair stayed "in a so-called room in an outhouse of a so-called hotel" near what is now Ulus Square. Knox-Helm's instructions were explicit: an existing house, accessible by road, with its own water supply. His



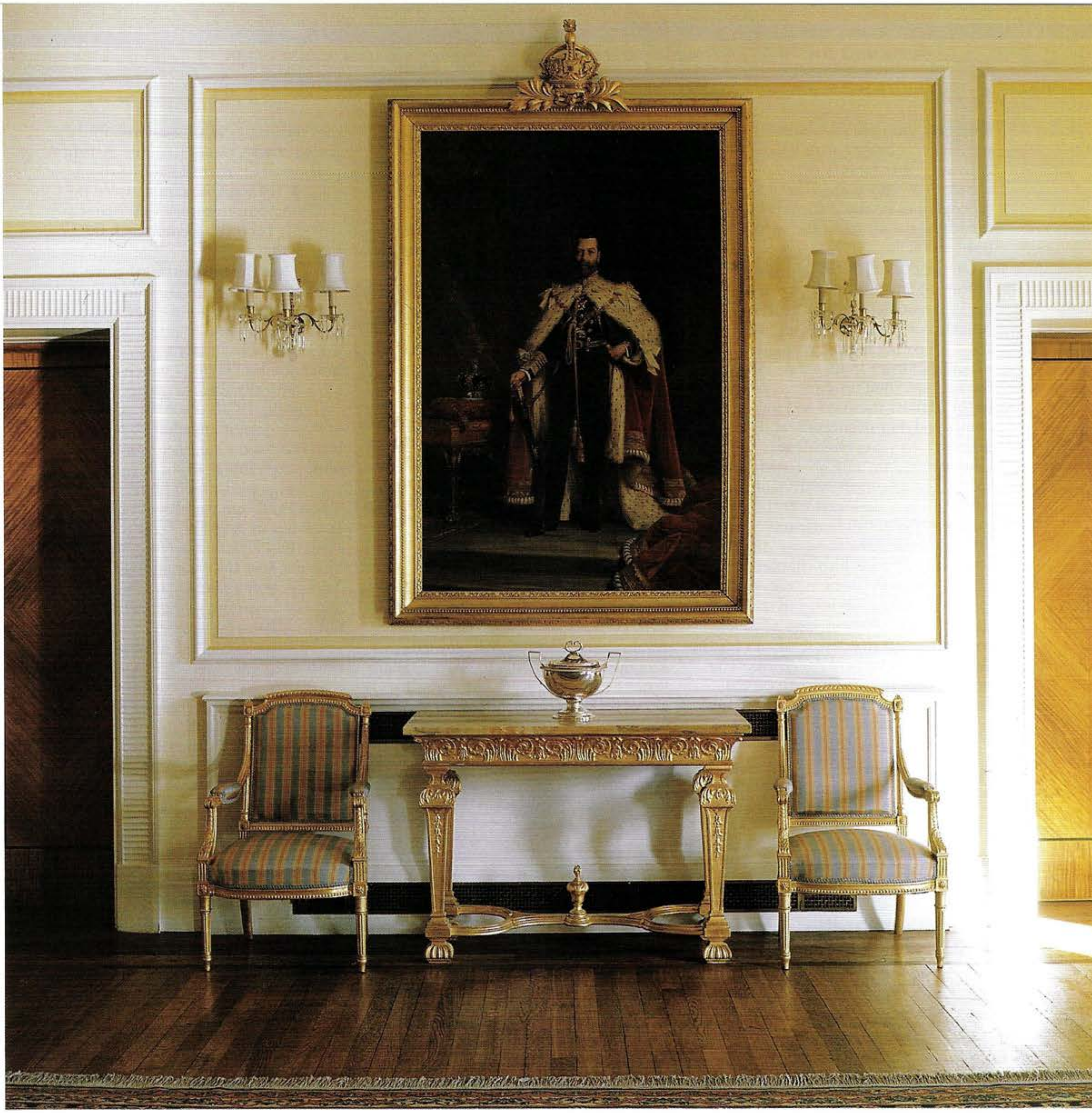
THE NORTH-FACING 'GREEN' DRAWING ROOM WAS UNTIL 1990 A BROWN ROOM MADE GLOOMIER BY KNOX-HELM'S SCREEN OF LOMBARDY POPLARS. THE PANELLING IS FROM 1939, THE GREEN WALLS AND SILK CURTAINS AND THE LOW STRIPY SOFAS ARE FROM PATRICIA DAUNT'S DAYS AS THE AMBASSADOR'S WIFE IN THE 1990S. THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY ABOVE THE FIREPLACE IS BY KNELLER

ambassador warned him to bear in mind "the awful possibility that the British Embassy might one day be obliged to move there".

Knox-Helm made a far-sighted choice: a site in Çankaya, near the President's villa, since it would be the first area to get reliable services in the developing city and the last to be cut off. A small eight-roomed house with its own spring was available – "a shack with a cool cellar underneath a fair-sized room, a smallish dining room and two ice chambers as well as a kitchen and four small bedrooms up top". Its owner, Salih Bozok, a childhood friend and once ADC to the Gazi, wished to make it a gift from the Turkish government. Knox-Helm's diary records that day: "Three things to do: first lease the house, second, fix a price for its purchase and, third, complete the formalities for its transfer."

The site was duly granted by the Turkish government and Salih Bozok was persuaded to rent out the house. By May 1926 it was fit for Sir Ronald Lindsay, leading the negotiations which produced the treaty resolving the Mosul dispute. Despite a three-day break while "the British house" was closed for fumigation, the treaty was signed within three weeks.

Once the owner's scruples over accepting payment of £2,500 had been overcome, the house was enlarged and



OPPOSITE: THE FIRST-FLOOR HALL IS LARGE ENOUGH TO BE USED FOR RECITALS ON THE BROADWOOD GRAND AND EVEN AS A BALLROOM. IN THE WAR IT WAS PARTITIONED TO MAKE OFFICES FOR THE HEAD OF CHANCERY AND HIS TYPISTS. ABOVE: GEORGE V, IN WHOSE REIGN THE EMBASSY WAS BUILT. THE SILVER TUREEN IS GEORGE III. IN THE 1990S THE EMBASSY'S PAUL STORR SILVER AND WORCESTER PORCELAIN WERE STILL TAKEN TO ISTANBUL FOR DINNER PARTIES

the embassy secretaries wintered there happily, spending their spare time terracing, gardening and planting trees. The lines of Lombardy poplars are their legacy, despite the Office of Works reprimanding them for planting the wrong sort of poplar.

In 1951 the old wooden "shack" was pulled down. Knox-Helm's affection for it was evident: "It had character but how it swayed in the winter wind. Life in it had been hard but it had been great fun… It was there that Anglo–Turkish friendship was revived and the foundations of the Anglo–Turkish alliance laid."

When the adjoining property belonging to Mustafa Kemal's loyal supporter Kılıç Ali came on the market in 1929, London was finally reconciled to Ankara and agreed both to the purchase and to building, as other governments were now doing. At a cost of £32,284, a red-roofed, white-stuccoed, dual-purpose chancery–residence, complete with lodge and driveway, was built within a year to Office of Works plans. Though scheduled to be the eventual chancery, it became the ambassador's residence until 1945.

On the eve of the Second World War, as the modernist French embassy was nearing completion and the Italian *fascista* compound was well under way, a British construction company brought in from India made a start on the long-awaited residence. They built to the highest standard and had it completed, bar decoration and electric fittings, two years later. It was appropriated for much-needed office space throughout the war: neutral Ankara was a diplomatic beehive. In the lovely, peaceful house today, it is difficult to imagine the main dining room transformed into chancery offices, the green drawing room divided in two for the registries, and the three sections along the windows of the hall partitioned off to provide offices for the head of chancery and the typists. The same sort of thing happened on the bedroom floor; and the surrounding lawns were covered in Nissen huts.

The changeover from office to residence took place over the summer of 1945. Anticipating the German surrender on May 9, partitions were removed and victory celebrations planned in an empty house, from eleven in the morning until midnight. The house saw over a thousand people streaming through, but once the dancing was over, the staff packed up and the house was turned over to workmen. The first postwar ambassador moved in that October.

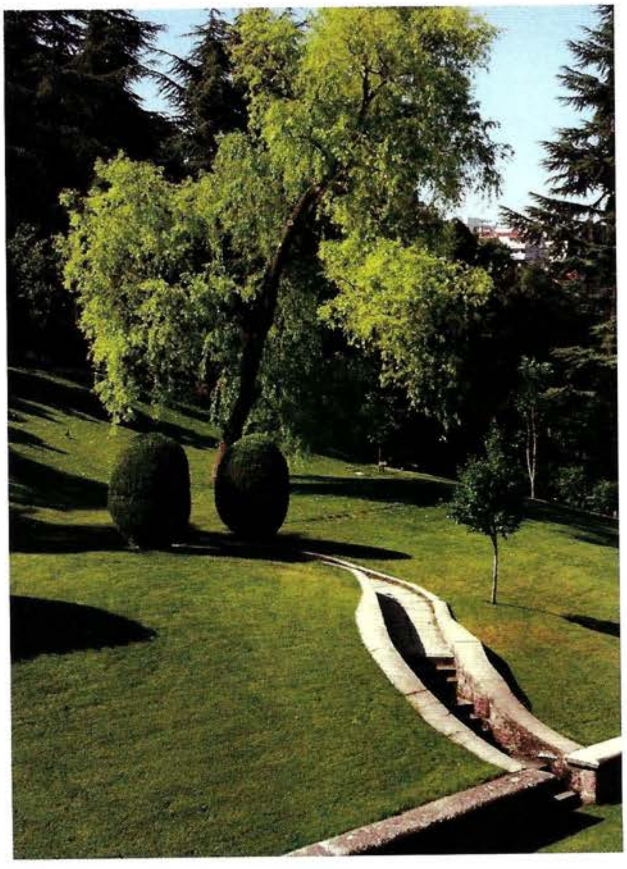
Since 1945 much has been done in the British embassy compound: the garden landscaped, the chancery remodelled, more surrounding land acquired. Above all, the residence, with its high-quality panelling, inlaid doors and Otis lifts, has been made into the comfortable, functional, well-appointed 1930s building it was designed to be. Though the structure of the house was turned from back to front at the insistence of Sir Percy Loraine, the pre-war ambassador who was never to live in it, even the strangeness of the resulting front hall and the turned-around staircase rising to the main hall is not too out of place. The climb passes a rare set of eighteenth-century paintings of the grand vizier's reception of an ambassador – giving time to note that the ambassador was probably the Dutch envoy, rather than the British. A portrait of Hobart Pasha, the romantic English seadog who commanded the mid-nineteenth-century Ottoman navy, benignly surveys all who reach the first-floor hall.

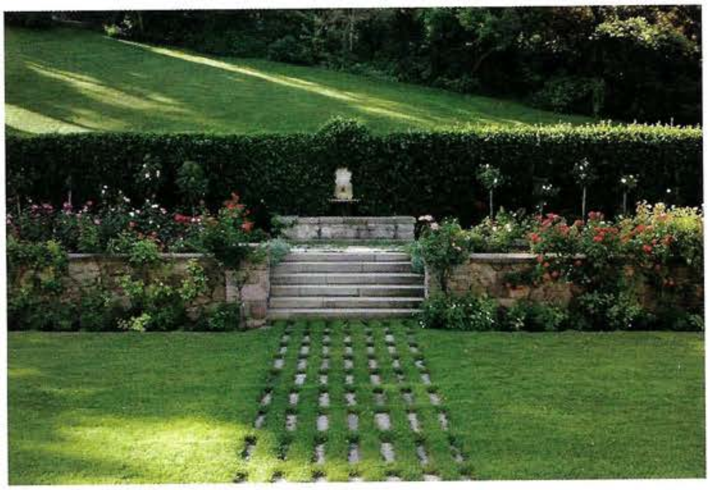
If asked "from where and when all this mix of furniture and furnishings" came, the answer is: in dribs and drabs from Istanbul and London. Like an English garden, it is a happy hotchpotch of tastes – which is, after all, a typically English genre.

Until the 1970s, no civilised denizen of Ankara went anywhere but to Istanbul for the summer break: the unpolluted shores of the Bosphorus and the islands were much preferred to the inaccessible and primitive coasts of the Black Sea or Aegean. Right through from the 1920s to the late 1960s, ambassadors stole a march on their Turkish hosts, packing up by mid-June and not returning to the new capital until well into September.

The British embassy went under dust sheets as soon as the Queen's Birthday party was over. Paul Storr silverware and Worcester porcelain, needed to embellish Pera House, the old Istanbul winter embassy, and the gardens at Tarabya, were packed into trunks embossed with the royals arms; and off they went, together with cook, butler, under-butler and several other domestic staff, on the overnight train to Haydarpaşa station and on by launch to Beyoğlu. The ambassador, his wife and her secretary were ensconsed in the Rolls at the head of a modest motorcade, which swept to the head of the ferry queue when it reached Üsküdar nine hours later. The British would find the French, Italians, Spanish and Germans already installed. Even the Americans and Russians, less attached to the old ways, came to Istanbul for at least a month. And the British were far from unique in maintaining a motor launch, complete with Italian crew of four, for the ambassador's use.

The only trace of the old summer routines, apart from fleeting visits to Istanbul by air, is the occasional arrival of flowers from the surviving gardens at Tarabya. Until recently, the British received a weekly hamper containing the produce of the mild micro-climate enjoyed in the extensive gardens of the great summer embassy on the Bosphorus, which burnt down over seventy years ago.





Opposite: mahogany trunks from the old embassy in Constantinople now make useful storage chests along the third-floor corridor. This page: home to short-eared owls and venerable tortoises, the embassy's garden, laid out after the Second World War, is one of Ankara's finest. Pruning and propagating roses is a favourite pastime for many an ambassador's wife. Another is ordering seeds that will flower for the Queen's Birthday in June

THE ITALIAN EMBASSY
EASY GRANDEUR BEHIND A FORMAL FAÇADE

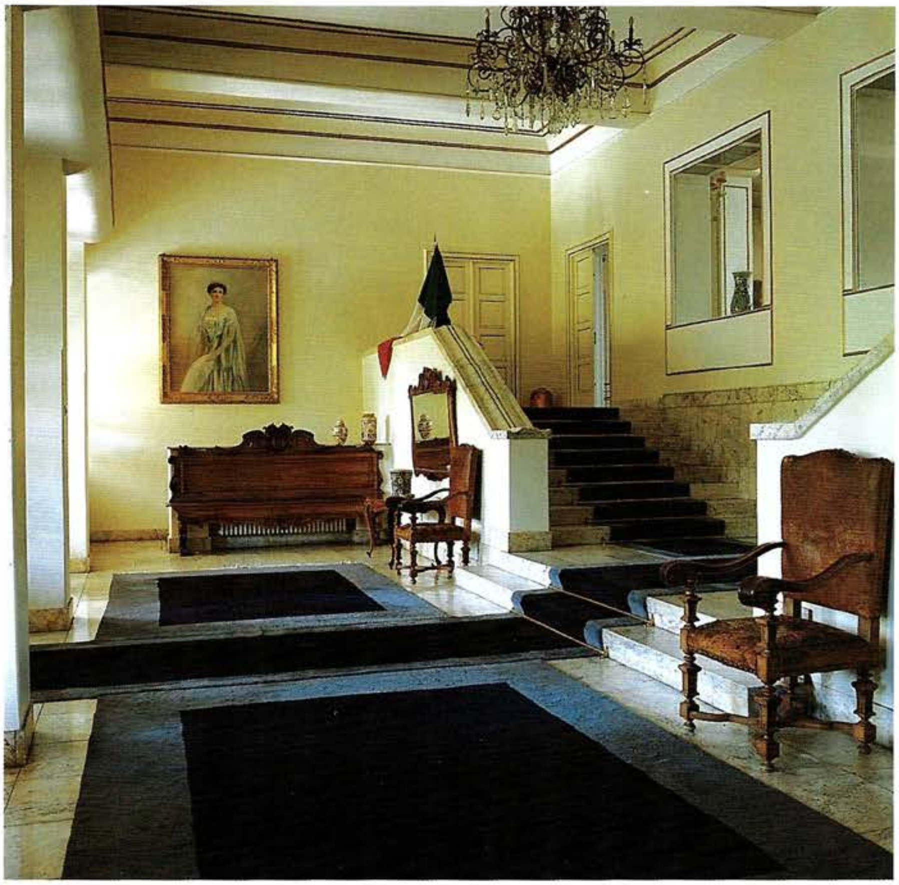
Opposite and top: the façade of Mussolini's 1938 Italian embassy. Above centre: the chapel was the first building to be completed. Pope John XXIII, then Apostolic Delegate, laid the foundation stone. Above: amphoras in the cool Summer Room

It was not until 1941 that the Italian ambassador was officially prised away from the old Venetian palace in Beyoğlu. An embassy compound in Ankara – chancery, church and stables – was at last ready, constructed at speed to designs by the fashionable Roman architect Caccia Dominioni.

Discussions about the move to Ankara had begun in 1926, when a site in Çankaya was refused on the grounds that it was too small. Hopes were dashed for prime land in Kavaklıdere when the Poles got in first. The plot offered by the Turkish government – beside the Germans, fronting the Boulevard in the diplomatic quarter – was too small. But, like the Germans, the Italians had good fortune in tracing the owner of the ground behind it. When, in September 1929, he was found willing to sell, a 30,000-square-metre site, part gifted, part purchased, sandwiched between the Germans and the Bulgarians, was entered into Ankara's official land registry as property of the Italian government.

The falling-out between Mussolini and Mustafa Kemal may have been the reason why it took another nine years before building began. It was not until 1938 that the foundation stone of the chapel of the future embassy was laid by the apostolic delegate, Monsignor Roncalli, later to become revered as Pope John XXIII.

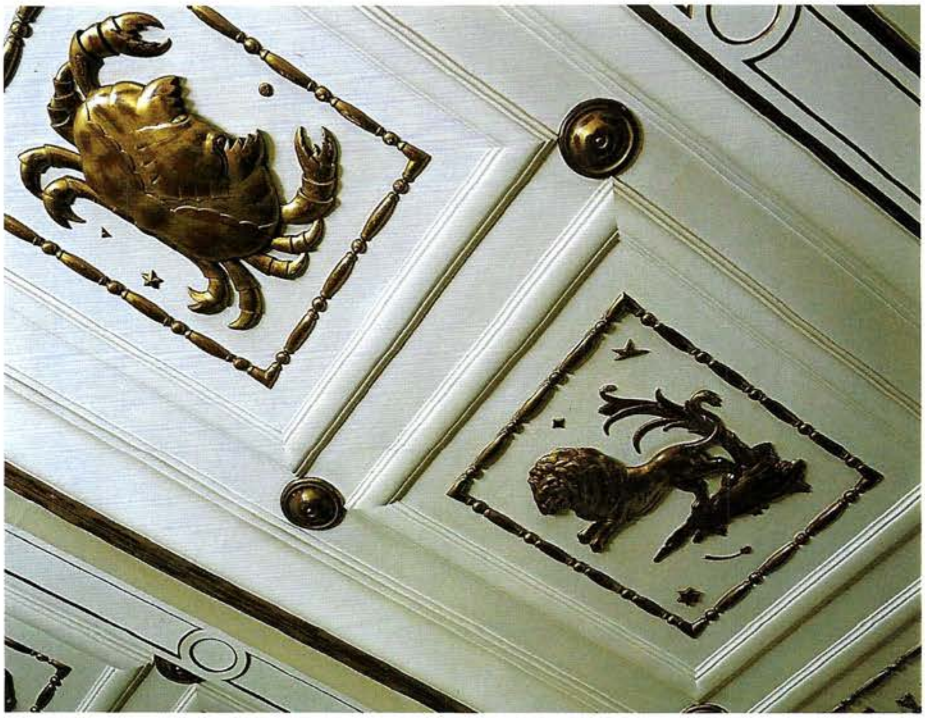
Those familiar with 1930s architecture will know that severe, arguably fascist, exteriors can hide both practical



OPPOSITE: AS FUNCTIONAL AS IT IS GRAND, THE CENTRAL HALL, WITH ITS COLUMNS AND GILDED CHAIRS, OCCUPIES THE WHOLE OF THE CENTRE OF THE PALACE. LIT WITH VENETIAN GLASS SCONCES, IT IS THE MOST PRACTICAL OF ALL EMBASSY RECEIVING AREAS. ABOVE: QUEEN ELENA OF ITALY PRESIDES OVER THE ENTRANCE HALL. THE FLAG IS OUT FOR NATIONAL DAY, JUNE 6. THE SHORT STAIRWAY LEADS TO THE RECEPTION ROOM ON THE 'PIANO NOBILE'

and elegant interiors. From the Boulevard, the red-ochre residence, its chancery discreetly attached, appears stark and forbidding. Trees, shrubs and formal garden, ravaged by the pollution of the 1970s, have recovered to give the terraced elevation both presence and shade; the steep sweep of the U-shaped double drive from a pair of lodge gates softens the arrival.

The chancery wing, comprising one central corridor, runs to a green baize door, through which the ambassador comes and goes. No one could fail to recognise the convenience of this arrangement, or the easy grandeur of the residence itself, with its western garden climbing up the hill behind. The great hall, overhung by balconies, leads into a fine withdrawing room, with a ceiling exquisitely plastered in squares filled with signs of the zodiac picked out in gold leaf. For size, for prestige, for functionality, it is a house that is a success. Its only drawback, apart from draughts (about which there are complaints), is the loss of a view to the eastern mountains, obscured by one of Ankara's more unfortunate high-rise buildings that shot up in the 1990s.



LEADING OFF THE RECEPTION HALL IS THE RICHLY DECORATED DRAWING ROOM (OPPOSITE) AND NEXT TO IT, THE ANTEROOM (ABOVE). THE PRIDE OF THE DRAWING ROOM IS ITS GILDED CEILING ADORNED WITH SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC (TOP)

THE AUSTRIAN EMBASSY
A SCHLOSS AMONG THE SKYSCRAPERS

It is no surprise that the beautiful Austrian Embassy in Bakanlıklar was planned, planted and built by Clemens Holzmeister, Austria's greatest pre-war architect. His controlling hand in the design and execution of this small Austrian gem in a vineyard donated by Mustafa Kemal was possible because, from 1928, he had been visiting Ankara to oversee the construction of the capital's most prestigious ministries, banks and monuments. When he took on the Austrian embassy in 1933, he had just completed the president's "new villa" in Çankaya and was soon to embark on the great parliament building.

Though the impoverished Austrian Republic had taken back the two Hapsburg palaces in Istanbul in 1924, it was another nine years before recovery from the loss of dynasty, army and empire made a move to Ankara possible. Between 1933 and 1935 an embassy to Holzmeister's design, an eighteenth-century Austrian *schloss*, rose behind fine gates set back from the Boulevard.

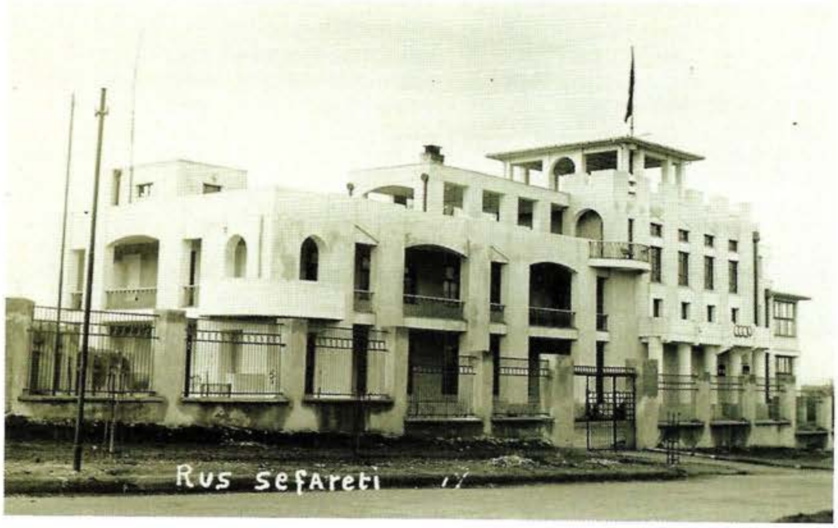
The conception of the embassy was brilliant. In order to give presence to the house and its two wings, which were to form the shape of a U around a sloping, paved forecourt, finished off by a pair of arched gatehouses, the Ankara construction company, Haydar Emre & Cie, had to dig to provide an elevated terrace on which to set the house. If the sloping elevation at its front gave height to the offices and stables in the wings, the back elevation gave form to the garden. From a wide easterly terrace giving off the central hall, a double stone stairway led down to the garden, once full of vines, later replanted with roses. It is still very pretty in itself but, alas, now overlooked by apartment blocks.

Seeing the house today, warmly and richly painted pale Schönbrunn yellow, it is difficult to envisage how it looked in 1945, having been shut for the duration of the Second World War once von Papen had moved on to the Czechs: it had had, after all, only three years of use. Sixty years on, one wonders whether the elegant staircase in the corner of the hall always had a carpet to enhance the iron balustrades and curling iron-work banister; whether the Murano glass chandeliers, the Meissen porcelain, the nineteenth-century tapestry of the Death of Uria, as well as the seventeenth-century painting of Süleyman Efendi and a remarkable collection of Persian carpets, were all inherited from the Hapsburg palaces in Istanbul. Certainly the set of painted and decorated 1930s dining-room chairs, table and sideboards were specially ordered for the house.

It is a residence in which successive envoys have taken pride, not least the present incumbent, Heidemaria Gürer, who, as founder of the Central Asian Summer Academy of Fine Arts, has opened it to visiting artists devoted to Central Asia and the Caucasus. There is little doubt that Clemens Holzmeister, former director of Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts, would have been as delighted by her success as he would have sympathised with her distress at the overwhelming presence of the Iş Bank, which now towers above the house, blocking out its light.

LEFT: THE GARDEN OF HOLZMEISTER'S AUSTRIAN EMBASSY, PAINTED IN SCHÖNBRUNN YELLOW, EXEMPLIFIES HIS GENIUS FOR USE OF SPACE. FROM THE HALL VIA A TERRACE A FLIGHT OF STAIRS DROPS TO A LONG GARDEN, ONCE A VINEYARD. ABOVE: THE DUTCH LANDSCAPES, MURANO CHANDELIERS AND PERSIAN RUGS ARE FROM THE OLD AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMBASSY

THE RUSSIAN EMBASSY
TSARIST TREASURES IN A SOVIET BLOCK



ABOVE: THE CONSTRUCTIONIST RUSSIAN EMBASSY IN THE 1930S. RIGHT: THE DRAWING ROOM TODAY, IMPROBABLY FULL OF TREASURES FROM TSARIST TIMES

The "new" Russian embassy of the 1980s dominates one of Çankaya's western spurs, a Post-Modernist block which displays all the grim might of the Soviet era. Fortunately for its occupants, the great palaces of the tsars in Istanbul survived the convulsions of Lenin's revolution and, *per miracule*, some of the treasures of Catherine the Great's famous winter embassy in Beyoğlu found their way to Ankara to embellish it.

With no ties to Istanbul, the Soviets had nothing to lose by being the first to accept a plot in the putative diplomatic quarter near the district reserved for ministry buildings by the new capital's urban planners. Their new building was not even the Soviets' first mission in Ankara. A Bolshevik legation had opened in Keçiören in 1923, but the building had gone up in flames, costing the life of the ambassador's pet bear. The finger of suspicion fell, for reasons no longer fathomable, upon the French.

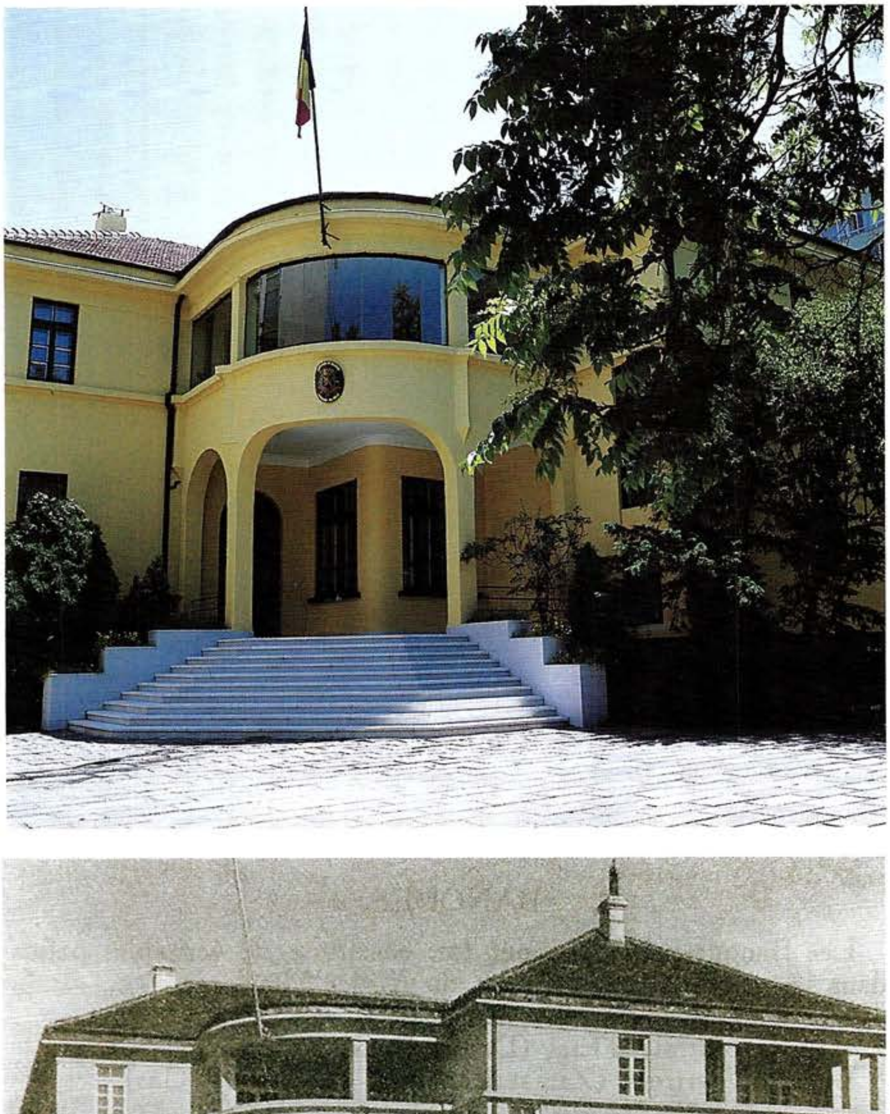
The sixty-roomed "old" Soviet Embassy on the Boulevard stood, large and well-furnished, from 1924 until it was demolished during the 1970s, a Constructionist experiment, inspired by the Cubists, a homage to Modernism and to the aspirations of the New Order. Its admirers, who enjoyed Ambassador Comrade Surich's wild parties, likened it to a Dreadnought, some even to a "surging ship". The wide balconies overlooking the Boulevard did indeed resemble the decks of a sea vessel but it was thought the architect's perilous, storm-bound passage across the Black Sea had been the reason for them.

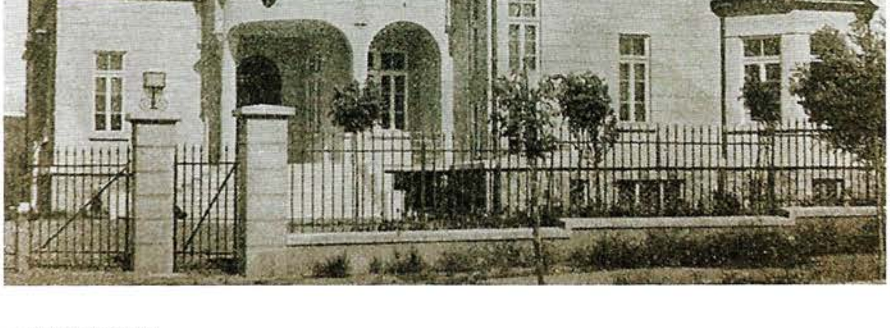
The building was immortalised in 1933 when it was used by the Soviet cineast Sergei Yutkevich for the documentary *Ankara: Heart of Turkey* which was shot to mark the tenth anniversary of the Turkish Republic. Since then two structures have replaced it. Whether the present building, today undergoing extensive restoration, will one day be regarded as an architectural treasure of the late twentieth century remains to be seen.

VEHBI KOÇ VE ANKARA ARAŞTIRMALARI MERKEZI (VEKAM)

THE BELGIAN EMBASSY

A RARE SURVIVING VILLA ON ATATÜRK BOULEVARD





VEHBI KOÇ VE ANKARA ARAŞTIRMALARI MERKEZİ (VEKAM)

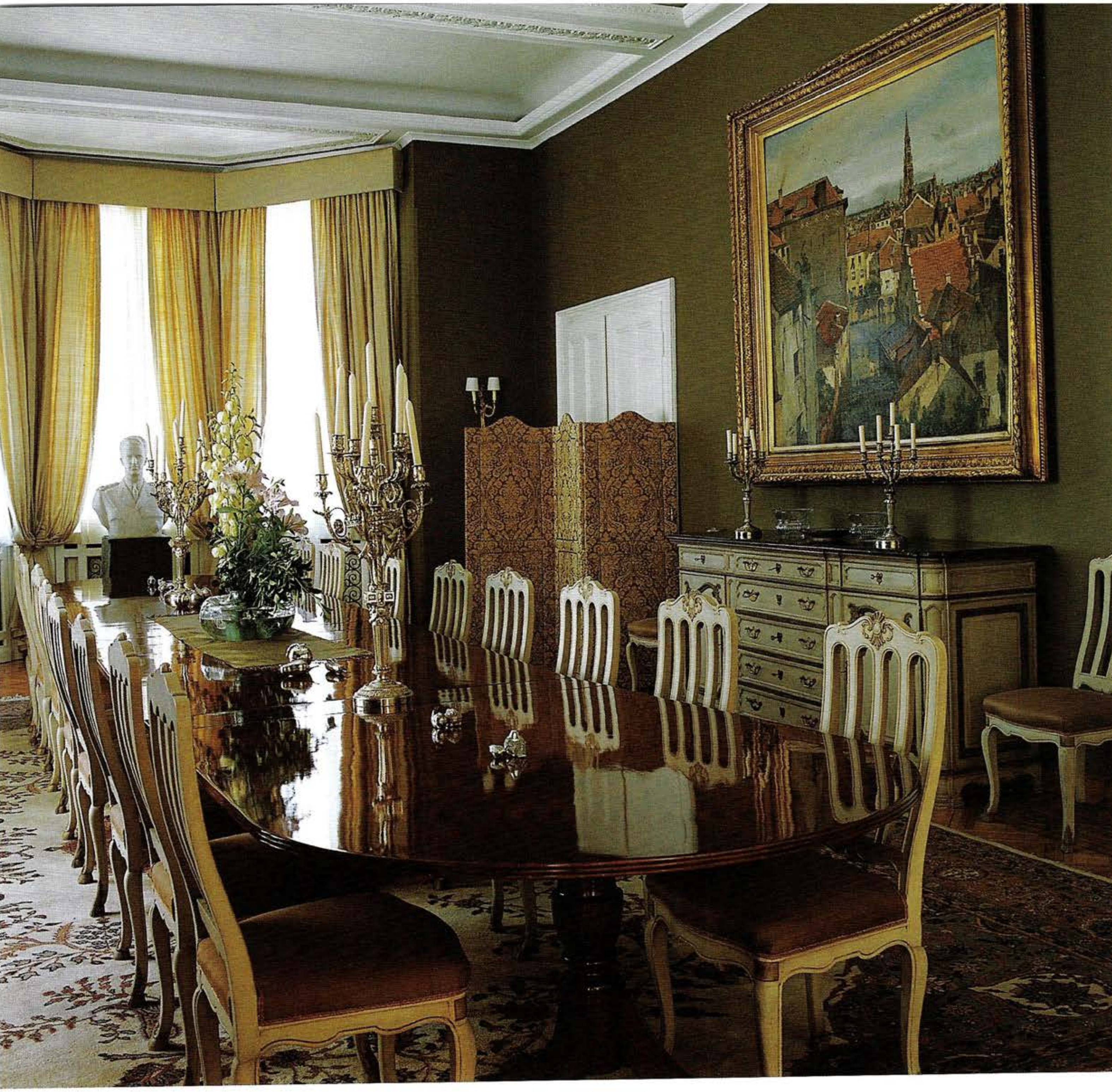
Belgian industrialists were well established in Turkey before the First World War. Once the Armistice was signed, business resumed, for instance the *wagons lits* service on the Orient Express and the sale of steel. But, despite such substantial commercial involvement with the new Republic, the Belgian government took time to respond to the summons to Ankara.

In 1929, during the coldest February on record, when snow held up the Orient Express outside Istanbul for over three weeks, Ankara's escalating land prices forced Brussels' hand. Two plots of land fronting the Boulevard below the Soviets, opposite the new Government Quarter, or *Bakanlıklar*, were purchased at a cost of £1,468.

On June 1, 1929, J Aggiman, the flourishing firm of Ankara architects and builders, quoted £16,000 to complete the job. Meticulous accounts still held in the embassy inform us that the lime, gravel and sand were brought in from Yozgat; the marble from Marmara; the ceramic and roof tiles, as well as glass, from Belgium; Portland cement and oil paints from England; and wood for doors and window frames from Romania.

A comfortable, well-proportioned, up-to-date stuccoed villa – its defining feature an off-centre open entrance reached by a semi-circular stairway – was completed in six months. Its interior betrays telltale trademarks of an Ottoman architect: Ottoman conceits in the patterning on the ceilings and the swirls on the radiators' iron grilles but, above all, the traditional Ottoman upstairs hall, off which all rooms lead. Aggiman was paid in sterling, the most stable currency following the Wall Street crash.

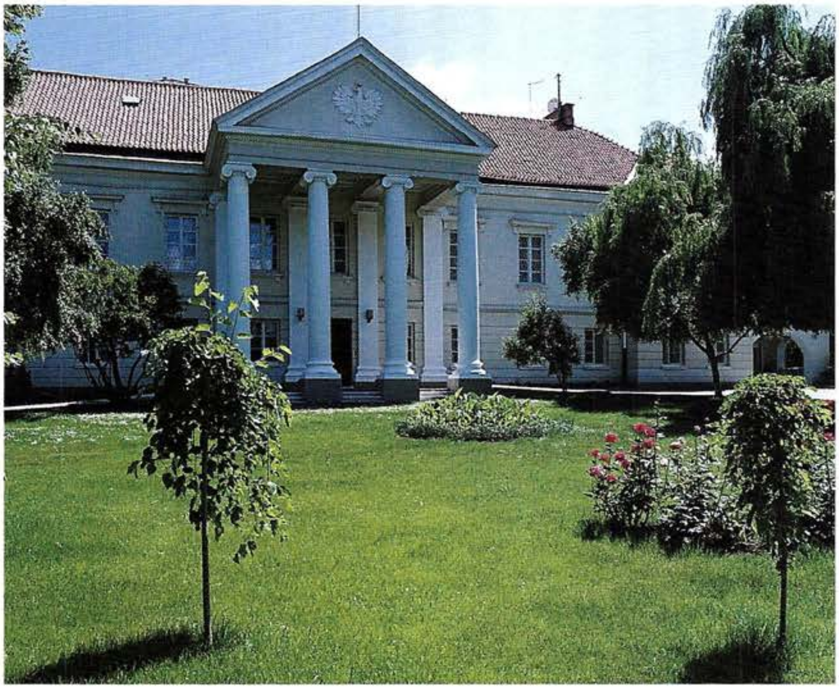
A fence, more for keeping neighbouring cows out than delimiting land not yet at risk of either development or encroaching roads, was built during the 1930s. Today the



embassy is one of only two villas on Atatürk Boulevard that has not been torn down to make way for high-rise apartment blocks and shopping malls. Once through the gates of this charming residence, a whiff of Mustafa Kemal's Ankara is still sensed.

The residence has recently had new life breathed into it by an envoy whose sympathy with this architectural period is exemplary. Among his improvements, the open terrace above the front door has been covered over to make a much-needed winter garden. Could it be that the beautiful hand-woven curtains adorning its several rooms, including the library, are replicas of those once hanging in the German Embassy's wooden house, famously admired by the Gazi? The ambassador chanced upon them in old Ulus. The elderly lady who kept the store told him that they were the last she held, the weaver having died of old age. Authentic Ankara weaving, by tradition woman's work, is, alas, for the present a dying art.

OPPOSITE, ABOVE: THE FAÇADE OF THE BELGIAN EMBASSY, ALMOST THE LAST OF THE VILLAS THAT ONCE LINED ATATÜRK BOULEVARD. BELOW: THE VILLA AS IT ORGINALLY LOOKED. THE SEMI-CIRCULAR STAIRCASE HAS REMAINED UNCHANGED BUT THE BALCONY HAS BEEN GLASSED IN TO CREATE A WINTER GARDEN.
ABOVE: THE DINING ROOM HAS TRADITIONAL LOUIS XV FURNITURE, A 'VIEW OF BRUSSELS' BY JEAN-BAPTISTE VAN MOER, DATED 1880, AND THE KING OF THE BELGIANS LOOKING ON



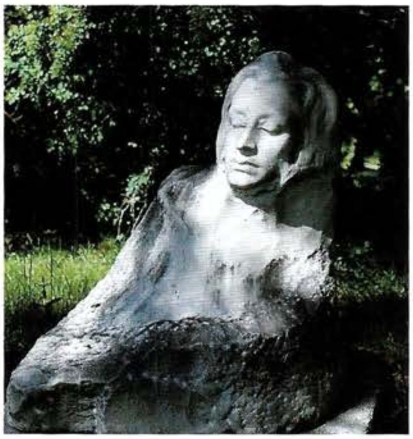
THE POLISH EMBASSY

PORTICOED GRANDEUR IN THE PERFECT SETTING

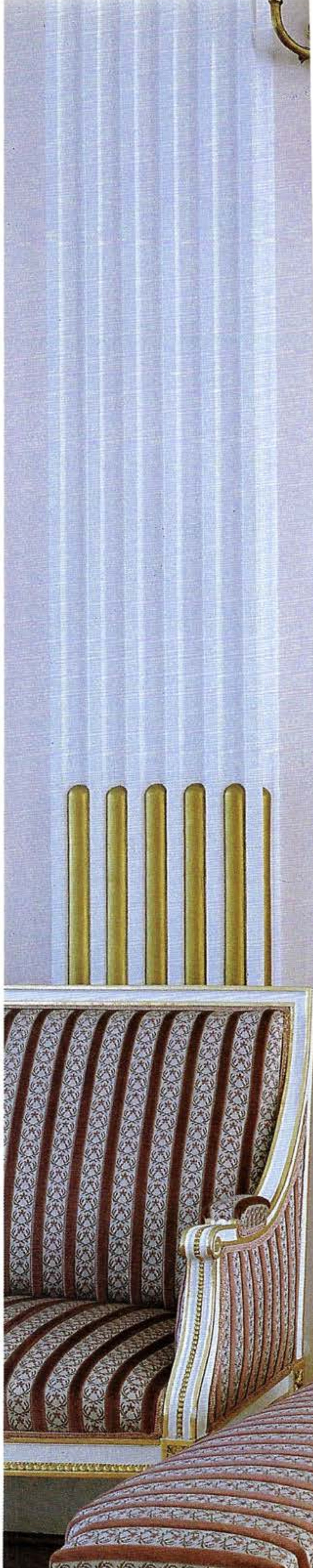
Few people had suffered so grievously during the First World War as the Poles. Following the armistice of November 11, 1918, Poland celebrated her newly refound independence by opening a mission in Istanbul. With Josef Pilsudski's new Republican government keen to be among the first to answer the call to Ankara, it was unfortunate that the gift of land offered to them by the Turkish government in 1924 was the vacant plot sandwiched between the Soviets and Germans on the Boulevard. To make up for this tactlessness, an alternative site in Kavaklıdere, on the limit of the diplomatic quarter, was found, which the Poles accepted on May 15 of the same year.

In Warsaw the Polish ambassador designate to Ankara, Wladyslaw Gunther, pushed for the new embassy to be in the mould of a Polish country house estate similar in style to the Belvedere, at the time the flagship building in the capital. On May 15, 1924, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed a contract with the ministry's neoclassical architect, Karol Iwanicki (1870–1940), but his plans exceeded the budget. Funds were no longer available to pay for so expensive a project and the counsellor heading the legation settled in three small buildings in Keçiören, outside the city.

During 1926 the budgetary



Top: the Polish embassy's portico was inspired by Warsaw's Belvedere Palace. Above: the great Romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz died in Istanbul in 1855. Right: the fine music room



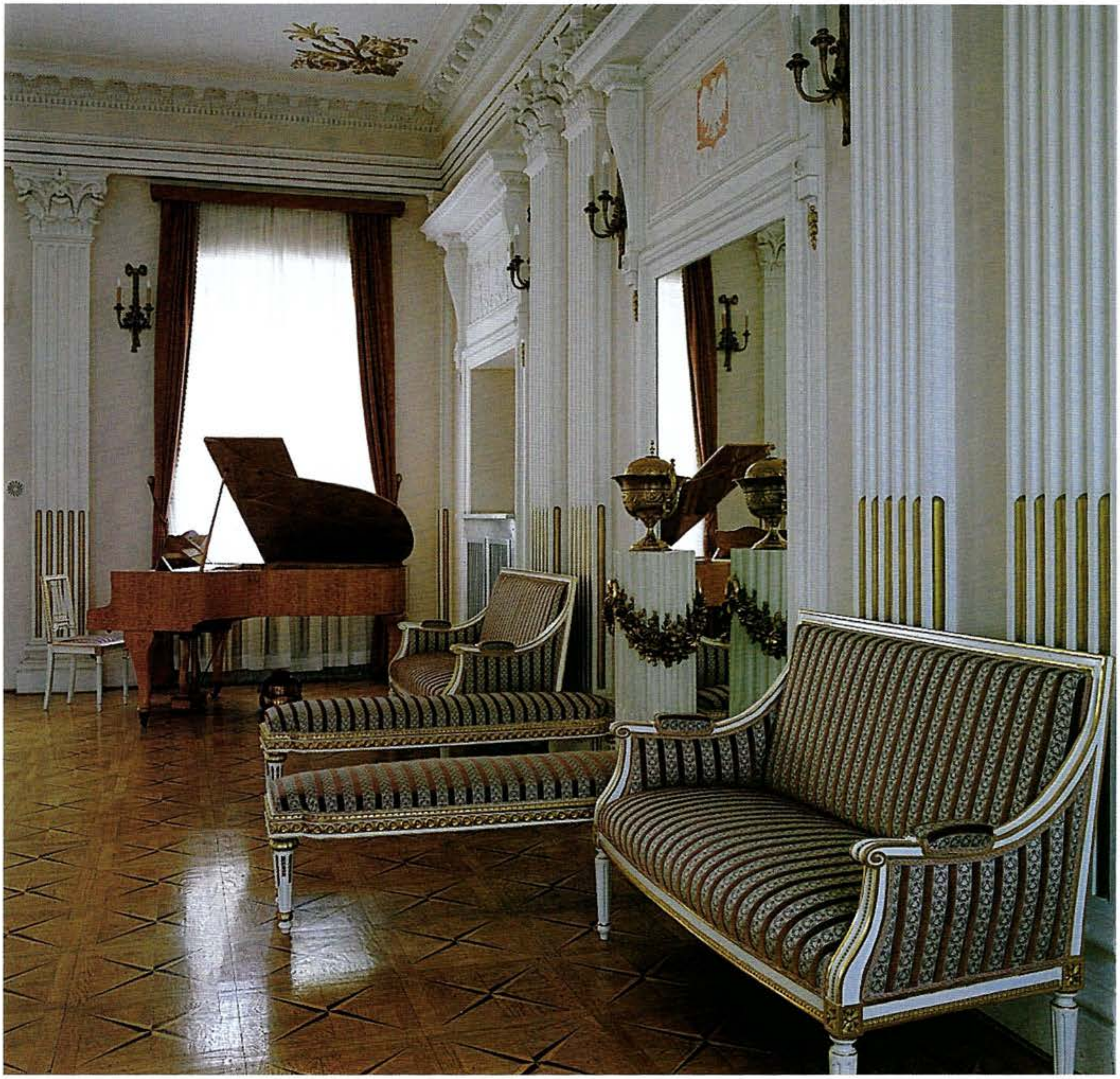
difficulties of the legation were further compounded by the Turkish government's demands for payment for the Kavaklıdere plot, since the Poles had not begun to develop it and the Italians were now keen to purchase it. With the threat of losing the whole site and the need to have a suitable house in the right area in time for the arrival of Poland's first ambassador, Warsaw granted the legation credits for the following year. By 1928 the land was fenced, construction started and, tradition has it, the foundation stone was laid by Mustafa Kemal himself.

Polish craftsmen followed Iwanicki's drawings for a grand yet unpretentious two-storey, cream-stuccoed country house, windows and walls classically plain, crowned by a red-tiled roof. Exceptional was the central portico in the form of an antique temple front, built in the Ionic order below a flat-faced pediment decorated with the arms of Poland.

An ill wind blew during the afternoon of June 25, 1935. A fire broke out in the attic, causing major damage to the roof and the ambassador's wing: a kitchen flue too near a wooden door frame. There was no option but to call in J Aggiman to repair the damage and ensure that the building remained one of Ankara's most prestigious – as it certainly is today.

Once inside the Polish embassy's large garden in Kavaklıdere, where flowering shrubs and gnarled fruit trees are watered by a stream overhung by poplars and oriental planes, the beautiful neoclassical Polish manor house, harking back to the golden years of the eighteenth century, appears oblivious to the swirl of life outside it. But the development of modern Kavaklıdere has inevitably impinged on the estate since it was acquired in 1926.

Nibbling away at its grounds began

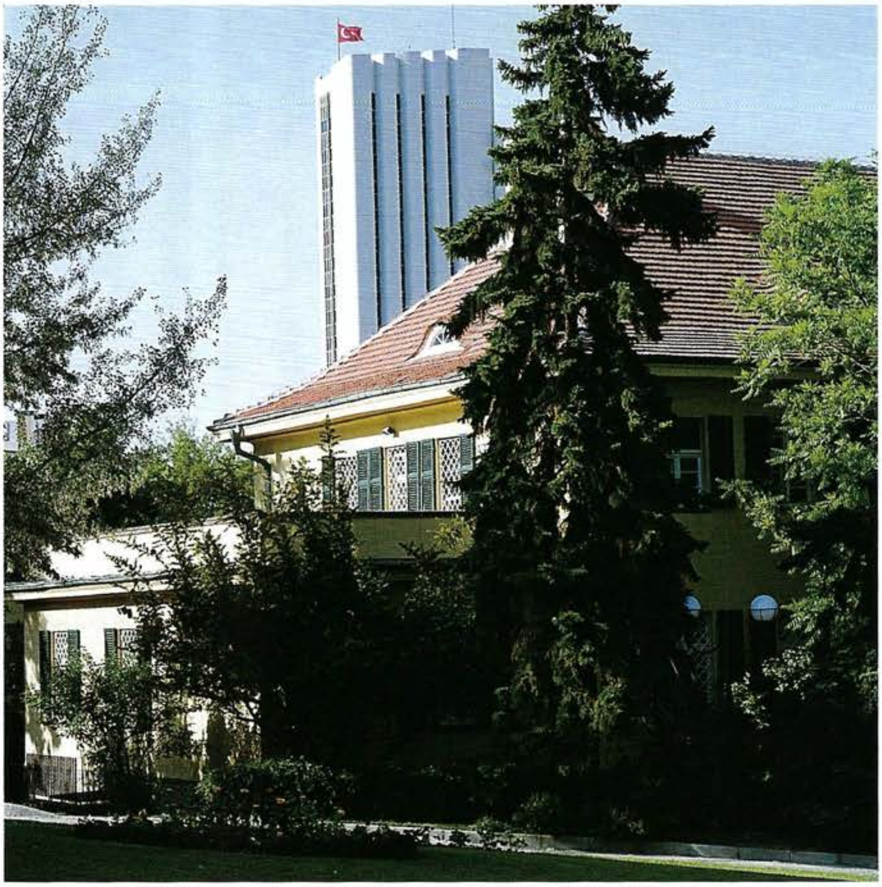


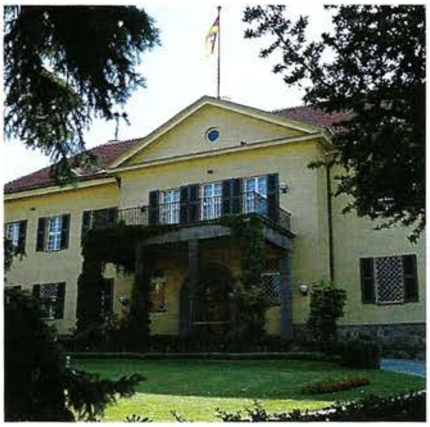
OPPOSITE: THE GDANSK ART DECO WOODWORK SPECIALLY COMMISSIONED IN THE 1930S FOR THE COUNTRY-HOUSE-STYLE DINING ROOM. FEW SUCH COMPLETE ENSEMBLES SURVIVE IN POLAND.
ABOVE: THE MUSIC ROOM WITH ITS BLÜTHNER GRAND, ENJOYED BY ALL MUSICIANS WHO PLAY IT. THE FRIEZE ABOVE THE DOORS AND MIRRORS DEPICTS POLISH CITIES. GILDERS FROM GDANSK WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PLASTERWORK. THE EMBASSY ALSO INCORPORATES THE AMBASSADOR'S QUARTERS, OFFICE SPACE AND A CHAPEL UNDER ONE ROOF.
IT WAS THE 1930S' IDEAL REPRESENTATION OF A FUNCTIONAL EMBASSY

in 1955, when 811 square metres of garden were required for the widening of Atatürk Boulevard. Then the northern part of the garden, with some venerable trees, was taken for the Kuğulu Park, with an extra slice through the drive to make Polonya Caddesi. In compensation the Poles were given a piece of land on the far side of the stream. During the 1990s a huge building arose on its southern perimeter, taking light as well as land. Now the Kavaklıdere underpass necessitates new arrangements for access.

Despite all its travails, this remarkable embassy remains a house that celebrates Poland's happy interwar years, most examples of which in Poland itself were destroyed during the Second World War. It is a charming house, where Persian rugs look their best on marquetry floors in the well-proportioned, airy rooms and rococo furniture and 1930s paintings look good alongside eighteenth-century paintings and 1930s furniture. A pretty music room contrasts admirably with the baroque panelling, plastered ceilings, marble chimney breasts, metal-worked central-heating covers and, not least, the great sweep of marble stairs from the hall to the *piano nobile*.

ALMANKÖY (GERMAN VILLAGE), AS THE GERMAN EMBASSY COMPOUND IS KNOWN, IS THE GREENEST OASIS IN THE CONCRETE WASTES OF KAVAKLIDERE. OPPOSITE: THE CHANCERY DRESSED UP AS A PRUSSIAN HUNTING LODGE

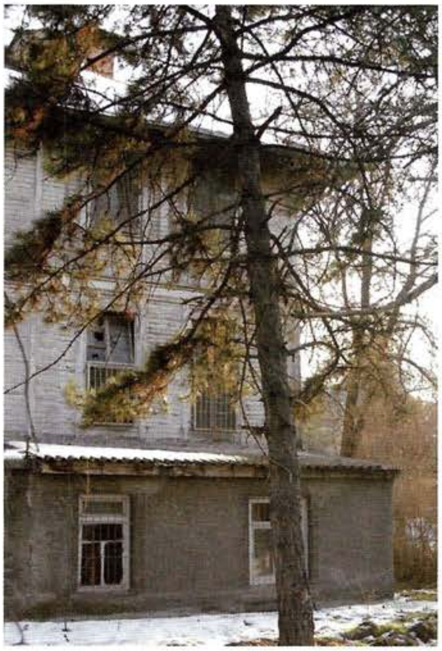




THE GERMAN EMBASSY
A HUNTING LODGE IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

Until the Germans built the "Prussian hunting lodges" in 1928, which now grace their compound near the Russians on the Atatürk Boulevard, they had a temporary building, so successful that it ended up in the Atatürk Orman Çiftliği, a model farm on the outskirts of the city, where it can be seen to this day. But even temporary arrangements were not easy in the aftermath of defeat in the First World War. And the decision to move to Turkey's new capital at the end of 1923 was complicated by the existence of two large embassy buildings in Istanbul – in Beyoğlu and Tarabya – both closed since the Armistice in 1918.

However, the establishment of good relations with Mustafa Kemal was the paramount consideration, and Berlin did not hesitate for long. Whether purchased or gifted, 28,000 square metres of sloping ground, rising from the Boulevard short of Kavaklıdere, was entered into Ankara's official land registry book as German-embassy terrain on February 26, 1924. Thereafter it was known locally as Almanköy, or the German village.



THE GERMANS ARE STILL WITHOUT A PURPOSE-BUILT RESIDENCE, BUT THERE ARE CLIMBING ROSES, GREENHOUSES AND A RIDING SCHOOL TO MAKE UP. LEFT: THE FIRST GERMAN EMBASSY WAS THIS PREFAB HOUSE BY THE HAMBURG FIRM CHRISTOPH & UNMACK. MUCH ADMIRED BY ATATÜRK, IT NOW STANDS FORGOTTEN ON THE ATATÜRK ÇIFTLIĞI, A MODEL FARM ON THE EDGE OF ANKARA

The urgent need for a suitable temporary building was solved by the Hamburg firm of Christoph & Unmack, whose catalogue advertised wooden prefabricated "facilities". The selected house left Hamburg aboard the *MV Stralsund* on July 24, 1924 and, nineteen days later, was shipped across the Bosphorus for onward transmission to Ankara by rail. The German firm of Philip Holzmann, responsible for its assemblage, had the ingenious wooden building erected on stone foundations a month after the arrival of the Weimar Republic's first envoy, Rudolf Nadolny.

Six months later Mustafa Kemal paid the building an unscheduled visit on his way to Ulus. For an hour he inspected every detail, from the glazed Dutch-tiled stoves, sanitary fittings and dining room that could "sit sixteen" to the clever use of local fabrics, most particularly as "little curtains for the French windows". Even the view from the balcony and the newly planted saplings in the "park" received praise. He left declaring the house had made so dazzling an impression upon him that he desired one for himself. "As far as I know," reported the gratified ambassador on February 9, 1925, "the German Embassy is the only one that has been singled out by a personal visit from the Gazi." The despatch of a Christoph & Unmack catalogue was given the "highest priority".

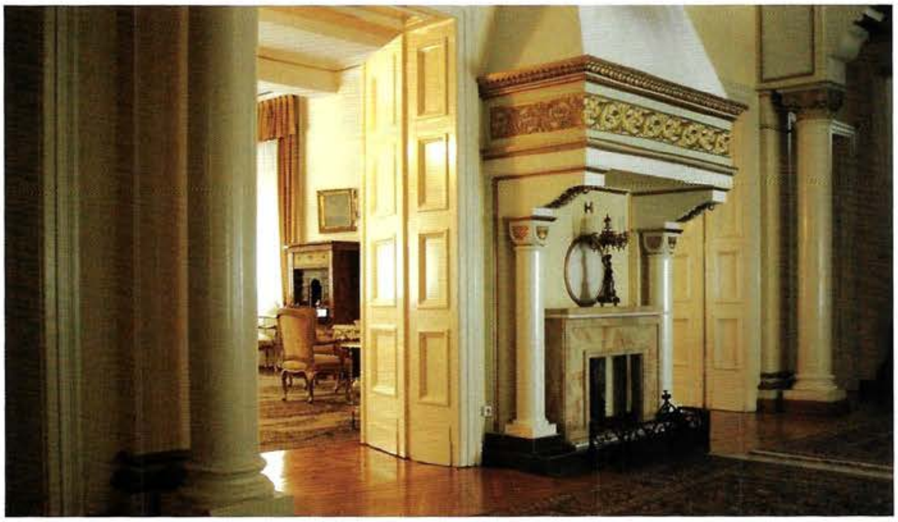
A further 37,000 square metres of land having been purchased in December 1927, Berlin approved a major development of the whole site. Traditional Prussian country-style architecture was considered admirably suited to Ankara's semi-rural landscape, and the moving spirit, when it came to design, was Ambassador Nadolny himself. He greatly admired President Hindenberg's sand-yellow and garden-green hunting lodge and insisted on a

near replica. By the end of 1930 the temporary building so extolled by the Gazi had been superseded by the present chancery building, flanked by two substantial staff residences, recessed behind twin-porticoed gatehouses either side of the entrance onto the Boulevard.

Ambassador Nadolny was no longer in Ankara when, in 1937, Berlin's directorate of historic buildings ran a limited competition for a prestigious avant-garde residence for the ambassador to Ankara. It was won by Konstanty Gutschow, but the plans were still awaiting Hitler's approval when he launched the Second World War with his invasion of Poland. When Ambassador Fritz von Papen arrived in 1939, there was still no residence. He moved into the Austrian embassy, Austria having been part of the Reich since 1938, and later took over the Czech.

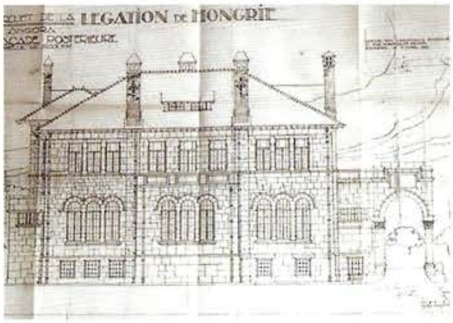
Of all the tales of wartime espionage, perhaps the most spectacular incident played out on neutral soil was the "Cicero affair". The position of the side gate at the back of the compound, through which the British ambassador's Albanian valet, code-named Cicero, slipped nightly on his way to the German attaché's house, is now unclear. But his onward passage through the compound's upper garden, past the stables, greenhouses and reservoir, can be easily charted. Berlin suspected Cicero's films of crucial Allied secrets, filched from the over-trusting ambassador's safe, were a "plant". He was paid in counterfeit sterling.

Postwar German ambassadors have benefited from the greenest oasis in the concrete wastes of new Kavaklıdere, complete with stables and the best of recreational facilities. But they still await a purpose-built residence; their house is one of the staff houses designed by their Weimar predecessor, Ambassador Nadolny.



THE HUNGARIAN EMBASSY AN IMPOSING BUT WELCOMING BARONIAL PALACE

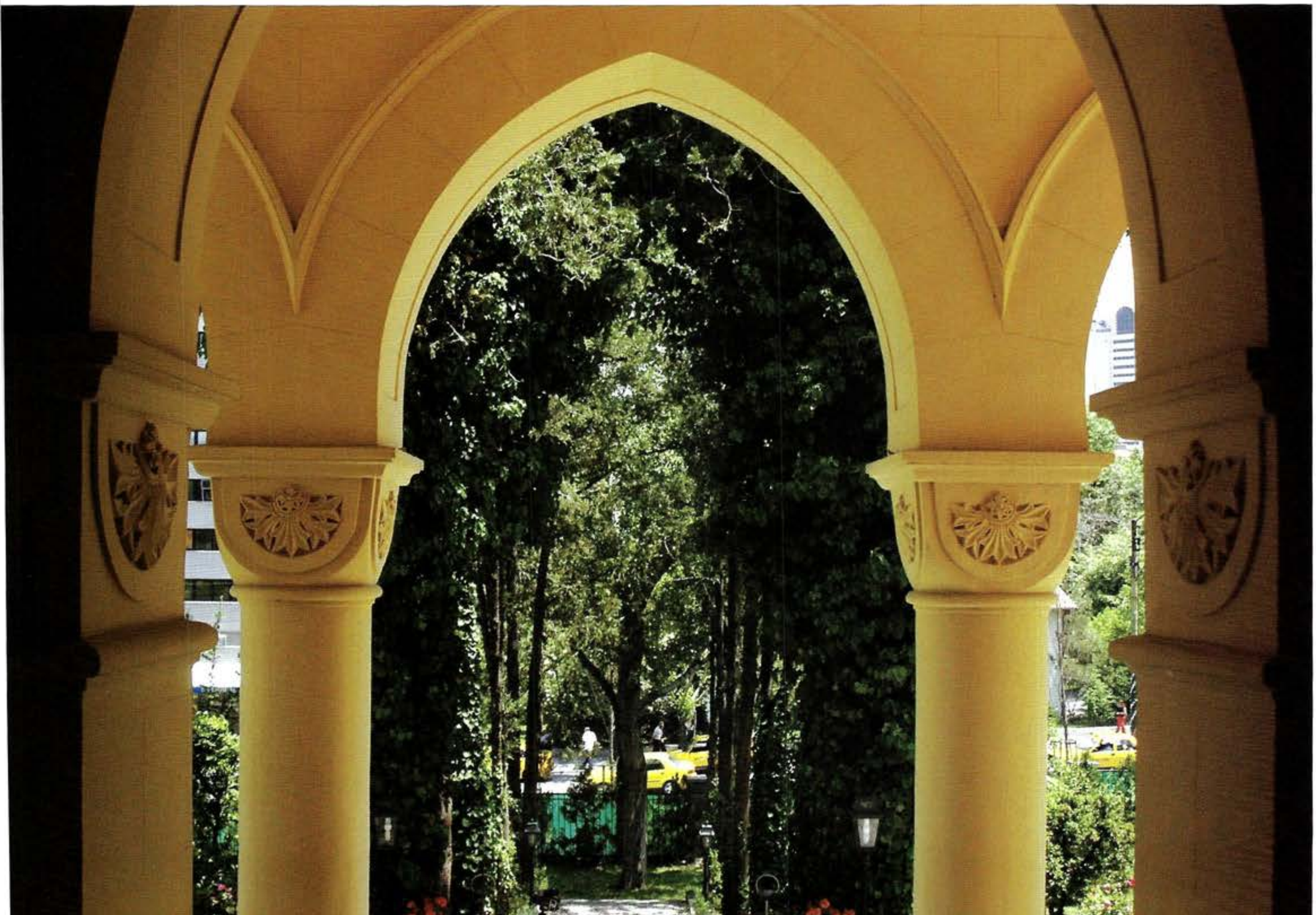
RIGHT: MONGERI'S BLUEPRINT FOR THE 1929 HUNGARIAN LEGATION. ABOVE: ITS HOODED FIREPLACE. BELOW: THE PORCH

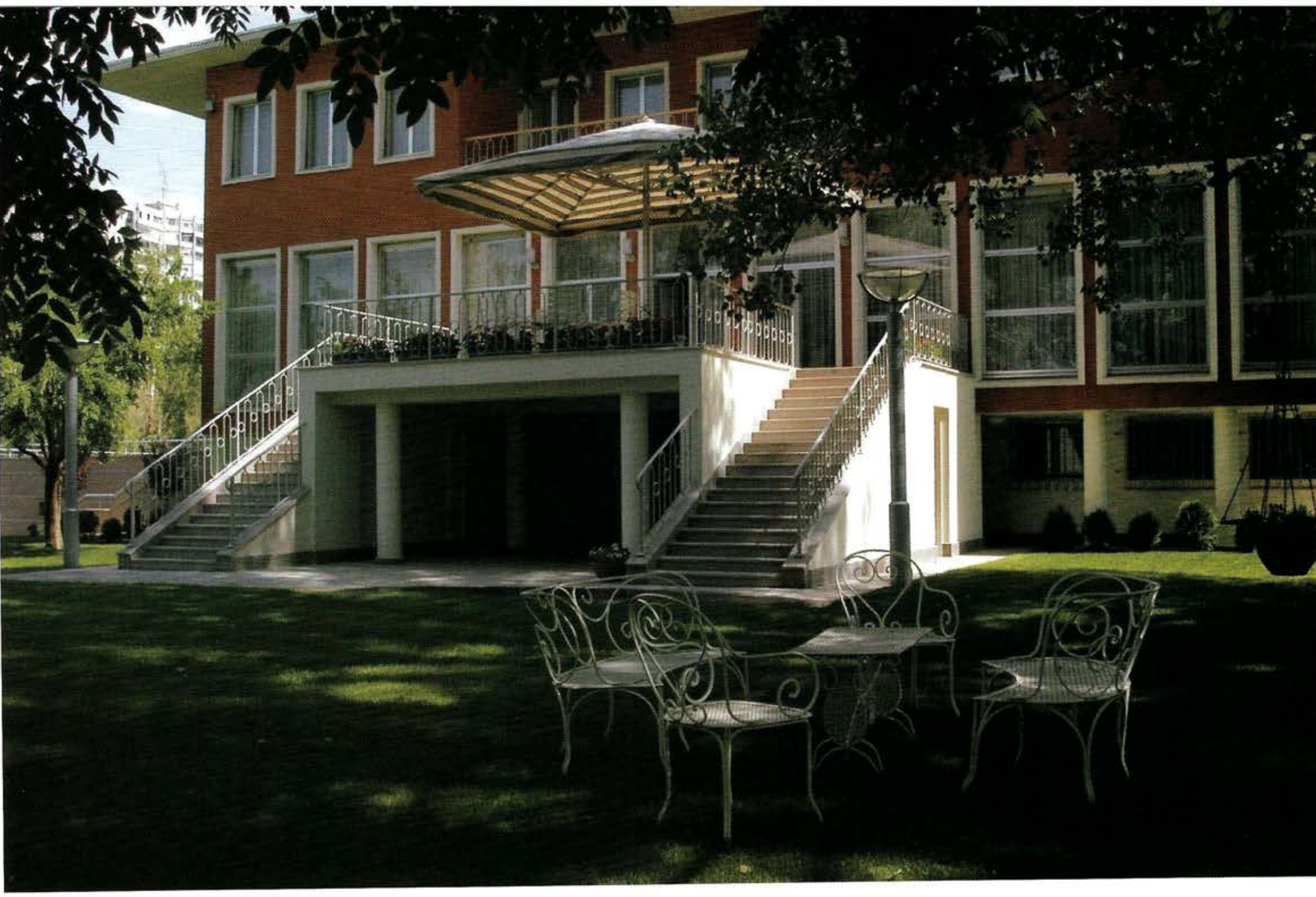


A forgotten jewel in the crown of Ankara's embassies is the residence of the Hungarian ambassador, built in 1929 to the designs of the successful Levantine architect Giulio Mongeri. It is a neo-Gothic celebration of the eclecticism of the period.

Realising that the original embassy, a small villa next to the Afghans in Maltepe, was too small (it is now a kebab shop), the Budapest government traded it in for new land in Çankaya and commissioned Mongeri, who was at the vanguard of Turkish national architectural style, to draw up plans for a separate chancery and residence worthy of Hungary's miraculous recovery from the First World War.

The residence boasts a double drive leading up to a brick and stucco building roofed in red tiles. The porch, set beneath pointed arches, is crowned by a fine coat of arms. The hall has grand columns with decorated capitals. And its great fireplace is an Art Deco curiosity with a central European difference. The fine hood, with its gilded arabesques, is supported by a pair of pillars: a grand surround for a plain 1930s marble fireplace to greet guests arriving on a cold winter's night.





THE SWISS EMBASSY
A MODERNIST NOD TO TURKISH VERNACULAR

THIS PAGE: MORE WINDOW THAN WALL, ERNST EGLI'S SWISS RESIDENCE, COMPLETED IN 1938, COMBINES ELEMENTS OF THE TURKISH YALI – INCLUDING OVERHANGING EAVES AND OXBLOOD WALLS – WITH THE WHITE STILTS SO BELOVED OF LE CORBUSIER

The Ottoman Empire had been represented at Berne from 1901 to 1915, its envoy's main task being to "watch over" troublesome Young Turks living in self-imposed exile, removed from the scrutiny of Sultan Abdülhamid's army of spies. But Swiss interest in Turkey was not of sufficient importance to justify a permanent diplomatic mission until well after the establishment of the Republic. During the Lausanne Peace Conference of 1922–23, the Nationalists reopened the Berne legation. But it took the diplomatic skills of Ambassador Mehmet Münir Ertegün, Turkey's envoy to Berne, to set Turco–Swiss relations on a reciprocal basis. Henri Martin, first minister to Turkey, presented his credentials on October 28, 1928, to fine words of goodwill.

It was not until 1936 that the Swiss took the decision to build, the architect Ernst Egli being invited to draw up plans for a functional embassy suitable for the Swiss government's first ambassador in Ankara. The building was commissioned in good time for the Swiss to play in Ankara the same important neutral role they carried out in so many capitals during the Second World War.

Painted red, overhung by eaves, the Swiss embassy residence, with its severe south-facing façade more window than wall, stands on a precipitous slope below the Israeli legation and above ground allotted to the Czechs, on what in 1960 became Şehit Ersan Caddesi, leading up to Çankaya.

The interior design was a foray into the modern, counter-balanced by an exterior harking back to a conservative Ottoman vernacular. For more than half a century the house was surrounded by a garden of roses which tumbled down to the Kavaklıdere stream, but recently some of this ground has been sacrificed for a state-of-the-art office block. As with most other embassies, aesthetics have been subordinated to practicality. ◆

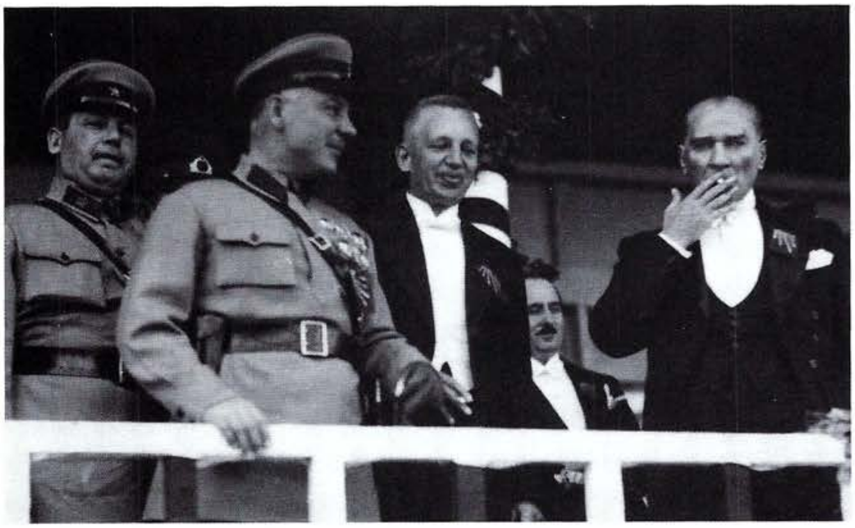
Patricia Daunt is the wife of Sir Timothy Daunt, who was ambassador to Ankara 1986–1992. For her articles on the embassies of Ottoman Istanbul, see CORNUCOPIA *5 and 6.*

The author is grateful to the ambassadors of Austria, Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Russia and Switzerland and their staffs for their help, most especially Sue Turunç and Gülçin Oral of the British Embassy. Thanks also go to Sir Peter Westmacott and his wife, Susan Nemazee, M Philippe Louet and Professor and Mrs Gülkan.

DIPLOMACY IN ANKARA

BIRTH OF A NATION

By Norman Stone



THE EMBASSY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, ANKARA

VEHBI KOÇ VE ANKARA ARAŞTIRMALARI MERKEZI (VEKAM)

Top: in 1933 Atatürk (right) celebrates the Turkish Republic's tenth anniversary with Russia's war minister, Klimentiy Voroshilov (leaning against the railing), and education minister, Andrei Bubnov (centre, in white tie). Voroshilov was the Soviet Union's second most powerful man after Stalin. This was the first time a member of the Politburo had ventured abroad. Above: Atatürk addresses the Grand National Assembly in 1924. The pivotal reform that year was the abolition of the caliphate. Opposite: ambassadors gather in front of the Grand National Assembly on National Day

Ankara, when it became Turkey's capital, was a very sleepy and provincial place, and it was chosen as capital chiefly because it was on the way to somewhere else. It had a railway station, one of the stopovers of the German-planned Berlin-Baghdad line, and its buffet served as the first French embassy. However, when the first Excellency put his head out of the swing doors, he contemplated a marsh, with some ruins on a hill; and when the first British Excellency arrived, to have dinner with the President, he would have to pick his white-tied way through snow-drifts, being careful to avoid being eaten by a wolf or a Turkish feminist.

However, even back then, there was a point to the town. The ideology behind it was a powerful one. It was stated thus: "The poor peasant of Anatolia had for centuries suffered from the violence and tyranny of the bourgeoisie… worn out by the disease that came from Istanbul, the bureaucracy, the dictatorship both of the Sultan's government and of the aristocrats, and also of the parasitic officials sent to him by the government… those aristocrats and Pashas who… spent… their lives… in splendid palaces and villas on the shore of the Bosphorus [and] had given themselves up to the vilest pleasures, consuming the results of the work of the poor class."

The speaker was a Comrade Ibrahim, who, representing the nationalist government that was based in Ankara, was addressing a gathering called "Congress of the Toiling People of the East", held at Baku on the Caspian in September 1920. Some 2,000 people attended, under the auspices of the Communist International. It was not the best-organised affair. Many of those

VEHBI KOÇ VE ANKARA ARAŞTIRMALARI MERKEZI (VEKAM)

present had arrived with produce to sell; a great many interrupted proceedings so as to say their prayers; and there was a cast of Jewish prima donnas – from Zinoviev, screeching his Moscow German, to Bela Kun, lately leader of the Budapest Commune, who held forth in wooden language at some length. The most surreal presence was that of Enver Pasha, member of the Sultan's close family and until recently virtual commander of the Ottoman armies. He was passing himself off as representative of the proletariat of Libya, but flounced out when told that he could only speak for ten minutes. In fact it was Comrade Ibrahim from Ankara who talked the most sense. At the time, the Turkish nationalists were indeed setting up a new state, and he did not waste his words. In 1918, the world had written off the Turks. The ghost of Gladstone had won: they had indeed been "driven out, bags and baggage, from the lands that they had desolated and profaned", as Gladstone's famous Midlothian threnody on the Balkan horrors had had it. Now, Turkey was prostrate.

Gladstone's successor, Lloyd George, thought that he could just parcel out these lands, oil and all, using Greeks in the west and Armenians in the east. The French in the southeast and Italians in the southwest were also in on the game, and everyone was eyeing the Kurds. The empire still formally existed, and the Sultan still went through his rituals, but he was just a picturesque puppet, living (poor man) with his five wives in the secluded Yıldız Palace, to which he had moved, because from the grander Dolmabahçe he had to look out at the enemy warships floating in the Bosphorus. He had been forced to conclude a peace treaty, signed at Sèvres outside Paris, and it left him hardly more territory than the small principality from which the empire had sprung seven centuries before.

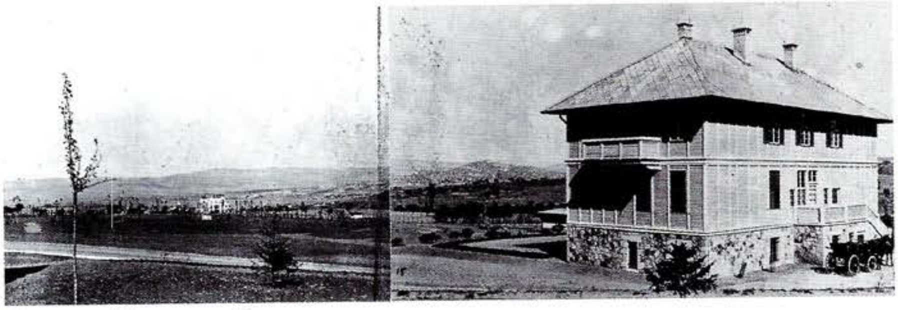
Some of the treaty's clauses, shoved in by this or that bossy goody-goody, were humiliating: train-brakes to be properly greased, dirty postcards not to be sold. Even then, the British made problems about paying the expenses of the Sultan's signatories, and when he eventually stumbled down the gangway into exile in Malta, they presented him with a bill for the transport of the five wives.

VEHBI KOÇ VE ANKARA ARAŞTIRMALARI MERKEZI (VEKAM)

But the shape of a modern Turkey was forming up at Ankara, thanks to the railway station. A nationalist resistance, famously led by a general of genius, Mustafa Kemal, had settled there, partly because of the railway and telegraph, and partly because, alongside the ruins, there was a functioning town. There was an officers' club large enough to accommodate a proto-parliament, and the place was far enough away from the Greeks and the Armenians and the British and the French and the Italians to be safe (though a Greek bomb did eventually fall on the station). Here, a disparate resistance developed, and Mustafa Kemal was extraordinarily astute at bringing it together when he had little to offer but himself.

True, there was in the east a small but still-functioning military force, under another clever general, Kâzım Karabekir, who was fending off Armenian attacks. It was from there that the Communists of Moscow came to hear about Ankara. For, at the self-same time as Sèvres, there was a far more important treaty in Moscow. The Bolsheviks had understood: here was a vital ally. This required extraordinary intuition because the first exchanges between Ankara and Moscow could take even three months, by the time its bearer had wended his way past hostile Armenians, a stormy Black Sea, and a southern Russia beset by three-cornered civil war. But the upshot was essential for Turkey's survival, and the first diplomatic gambits of any seriousness in Ankara occurred in that context.

The USSR and Republican Turkey formally came into existence at the same moment, 1922–23. But before then, they were in effect the first states to recognise each other, exchanging ambassadors. The role of the first Soviet one in Ankara, Aralov, is commemorated in a way that cannot have any counterpart elsewhere. On the national monument in Taksim, in Istanbul, there are four identifiable faces among the unknown peasants, soldiers and intellectuals: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, of course; his long-term second-in-command, Ismet Inönü; the long-term chief of staff, Fevzi Çakmak; and Aralov. His place is deserved. Without the shipments of gold (500kg in 1920) and of armaments that came from the Bolsheviks, the Turkish nationalists might not have survived. Had it not been for Atatürk's astuteness, the price for this help might easily have been a Soviet Turkey. As matters turned out, the Turks did better out of the whole deal than Moscow did: in fact, you could even argue that there



THE GERMAN EMBASSY, ANKARA

VEKAM

Opposite: Henri Franklin-Bouillon in Ankara in 1921 to confirm France's formal recognition of the Grand National Assembly, rather than the Sultan, as sovereign power. With him is Mustafa Kemal Pasha in a tall Caucasian kalpak. Above: the first German embassy was brought by train from Hamburg. It was later moved to Atatürk's model farm (page 80). Right: the first British embassy

have been only two Western statesmen who, from a position of weakness, managed to use the Communists more than vice-versa (the other is de Gaulle).[1]

The area of initial contact was the southern Caucasus. Here, in 1919, there was a British presence (the oil of Baku) but there was also Bolshevik infiltration, partly managed by Stalin, himself from the area. There were Georgian nationalists, collaborating with the Germans (whose representative was that same von der Schulenburg who was ambassador in Moscow in 1941); there was a proto-Azerbaijan; and the Armenians, their population scattered all around, were endeavouring to set up a sort of miniature empire between the Black Sea, the Caspian and the Mediterranean. Here, megalomania was laced with hard luck story. They counted on Anglo–French support: their first act was to invade Georgia, though they were soon at war, as well, with all of their neighbours. They wanted to seize the lands of the old historic Armenia, in eastern Anatolia, although the bulk of the local population was Muslim, whether Azeri, Kurdish or Turkish. Kâzım Karabekir's little army, based on Erzurum, got in the way of this, but the Armenians, beset by what now seems to be preposterous over-confidence, went ahead. It was not a pretty business. The territory of today's Armenia, roughly the same as the old Russian province of Yerevan, was two-thirds Muslim. None of that population survived.[2]

A common fear of Armenian expansionism gave stiffening to the initial Turkish resistance; common fear of the British and French backers of that expansionism led to an alliance between the Ankara resistance and the Bolsheviks in Moscow. In 1920, arms and gold began to arrive at Erzurum and Ankara, and a wave of pro-Soviet enthusiasm swept the nationalists. Their ministers were renamed "commissars", and some of them took to wearing the tall Caucasian lambs-wool *kalpak*, in which Atatürk himself was photographed. Cultural closeness happened, as Atatürk much enjoyed Aralov's company; his wife corresponded with the sister of the Soviet Commissar for Enlightenment, Anatoly Lunacharsky, about how Turkic-speaking peasants could be made literate, and "People's Houses" (*Halk Evleri*) should be set up in villages for this and similar purposes, on the Soviet model. In the event, a bargain was drawn up. Two aristocrats met in Moscow, Ali Fuat Cebesoy, an Ottoman colonel, and GV Chicherin, a *Death-in-Venice*-class homosexual and an expert on the Mozart quartets, who commissared for foreign affairs. Addressing each other as "Comrade", they drew up an alliance. Its basis was in the end simple enough: a swap of Armenia for Azerbaijan. Moscow would not support Armenian claims beyond Yerevan, and the Turks would not interest themselves in Azerbaijan (in fact between the wars it was forbidden to bring exile-Caucasus literature into Turkey at all). On this basis, the Turks gained weaponry that let them defeat the French and the Armenians.

Then the French came to terms, and started selling arms to the Turks, whom they wanted to win over.[3] Ankara then experienced its inter-war boom as a planned capital. Some of the architecture of that period is quite distinguished in a Bauhaus way; distinguished foreigners arrived to assist with the creation of a cultural life worthy of a capital (Dame Ninette de Valois sorted out the ballet, and the Busch family, of Glyndebourne fame, had a hand in the music). Ankara Turks took their mission very seriously, and quite successfully abolished both malaria and, at least in the towns, illiteracy.

Now that Turkey was back on the map, the embassies also spread. The most attractive one is the Belgian, though it is now ringed by concrete. The most pretentious is probably the Hungarian. In the Twenties, much was made of the racial or linguistic affinity of Turks and Hungarians, and Hungarians (often but not always Jewish) had not only been outstandingly good Turcologists but had even given sage advice as to alphabet reform and nation-building (one of them wrote the first version of the national anthem).

The Republican single party maintained an office in Budapest, right up to the days of the fatal siege early in 1945. The French and British (reluctantly) set up shop, and quite soon the British ambassador was a regular at cabinet meetings. The Germans had lavish grounds, in honour of the old alliance, though in the Nazi period the ambassador, the weaselly von Papen, who had tricked Hitler into power and had then been tricked by him out of it, used it as riding ground, and operated out of the Czech embassy, Hitler having seized Prague. Papen was a somewhat ridiculous figure, even to the extent that his money came from his wife's royalties from urinals, but he was given one of the greatest espionage presents of all time, when the Albanian valet (code name "Cicero") of the British ambassador, Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, managed to extract from his master's safe the records of Roosevelt's, Churchill's and Stalin's most secret agreements in 1943 and 1944. He was paid in forged notes, but managed to escape, and to end in poverty in Kenya.

Soviet start, NATO conclusion. But all in all, Ankara worked well. The new Turks seem to have learned quite quickly how foreign affairs should be conducted, and Ankara's foreign policy in that generation was remarkably successful at a balancing act that kept the country out of wars, and even managed reconciliation with Greece (in 1930, the old enemy, Venizelos, paid a state visit to Ankara, and proposed Atatürk for a Peace Prize).

Since that time Ankara has gone through an enormous expansion, and, nowadays, in the areas of the old Republican government, you can step out of a Twenties guesthouse, complete with photographs of Atatürk dancing the foxtrot and of ladies in cloche hats, and find yourself in scenes of Central Anatolia, complete with kebabs and rural women with covered heads in long coats shopping in bazaars. But it is still quite an efficient city, a place where work gets done. Someone called it the last monument to Positivism, and it is true that all enlightenments bore themselves to tears, in the end.

The buses to Istanbul are full every Friday, as people think rather less than guiltily of those "vilest pleasures" of yore. In fact there is now a brain-drain to Istanbul, and if you ask after the origins of the men and women who make it work, you very often find Ankara at the core.[4] Istanbul, with history, money and flair, is no doubt again not just the real capital but a world city in a way that Ankara could never, ever, claim to be. But Ankara, mini-Siberian climate and all, has the deep creativity: *la Turquie turconnante*, and there is not too much harm in that. ◆

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NOTES

1 KEEPING AHEAD OF THE COMMUNISTS
Charles de Gaulle, organising the French Resistance in 1940 from London, began with a handful of people. He needed to control the movement in France proper, which was quite strongly Communist, and might even, upon Liberation, have set up a Communist-controlled Paris. De Gaulle, challenging "the Anglo-Saxons", cultivating Stalin, allowing men whom he knew to be Communist agents to remain in his most intimate circle, gulled the Communists into supporting him, whereupon he could impose himself on "the Anglo-Saxons" in place of General Gouraud whom they were promoting. He, not the Communists, took over in liberated Paris in 1944; whereupon they were sidelined. Perhaps Harold Macmillan, the British minister closest to him, guessed what the game was. No-one else did. In the 1960s de Gaulle played another version of it, and survived the events of May 1968 because the Communists made no effort to exploit them.

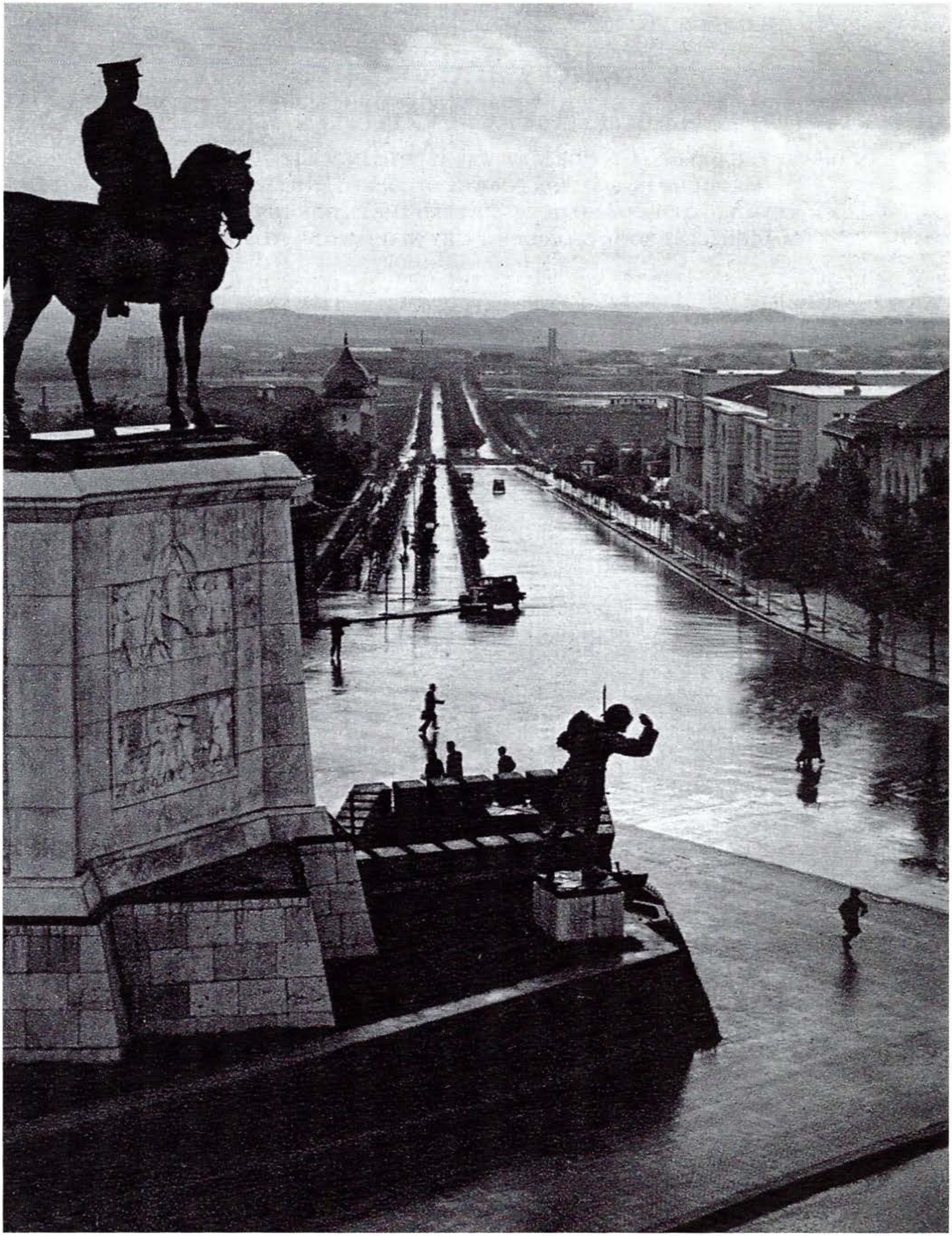
The same quality appears in Atatürk. Quite early on, he seems to have guessed that infiltration would be a Communist tactic. His answer was to set up a dummy Communist party, the secretary-general of which was (here a certain humour must have crept in) Celal Bayar. All other men in a similar position, with Communists breathing down their necks (Kerensky in St Petersburg, Benes in Prague, Chiang Kai-Sek in Chungking, Ngo Dinh-Diem in Saigon – the list goes on and on) made a hash of things. It is maybe worth wondering what would have happened if, without Mustafa Kemal, rump Turkey had become a People's Republic. Tansu Çiller would have been a wonderful *komsomolka*. Professor Mete Tuncay would have been in a camp.

2 SILENT MAJORITY
It is to their descendants' credit that the Muslims of old Armenia do not lobby Congress or the Assemblée Nationale or the Cardiff City Fathers or the Edinburgh City Council, as they would be entirely justified in doing, for a resolution or a monument to "recognise" this as a "genocide". In this respect, the modern Armenian diaspora behaves quite differently, regarding its own century-old case as unique. It is not. Half of the urban population of Republican Turkey was made up of Muslim refugees from the Balkans or the Caucasus, victims of a tragic process that affected most people in the southern Caucasus. What is now badly needed is for the diaspora Armenians to recognise that their great-grandfathers were not just helpless victims.

3 FRENCH CONNECTIONS
The station buffet was first used for diplomatic purposes by a French representative, Franklin-Bouillon, in 1920. The French had occupied Cilicia, expecting to add it to their newly won lands in Syria. They (and an Armenian legion they had recruited and then contemptuously disbanded) then faced strong resistance, active and passive. Again there was a territorial bargain. Turkey could have Cilicia (Adana and Mersin) and the French would retain Hatay (Antioch) but with certain old Turkish rights preserved. Just before 1939, to gain Turkish support against Germany, Hatay was handed back.

4 ANKARA'S DISAPORA
begins with Vehbi Koç. In the mid-Fifties, after a career of legendary acuteness, he moved the firm's headquarters to Istanbul and established it on a worldwide scale. The origins of this were in Ankara, and in his memoirs he explains how and why, as a little boy in Ankara, he, with his donkey, had seen the Greeks and Armenians on their horses. He wished he could have one. In tribute to their origins, the Koç Foundation have established an excellent museum of industry in a restored Ottoman building near the castle, and it has the most picturesque restaurant in town. The family's summer vineyard house in Keçiören has also been beautifully restored and is open to visitors as a research centre and exhibition space. (www.vekam.org.tr).

For travel notes, visit cornucopia.net/ankara.html



VEHBI KOÇ VE ANKARA ARAŞTIRMALARI MERKEZI (VEKAM)

ANKARA IN THE 1940S. HOW QUICKLY THE CITY GREW CAN BE SEEN FROM PFERSCHY'S 1930S PHOTOGRAPH ON PAGES 40 AND 41

GEORGE MAW 1832–1912

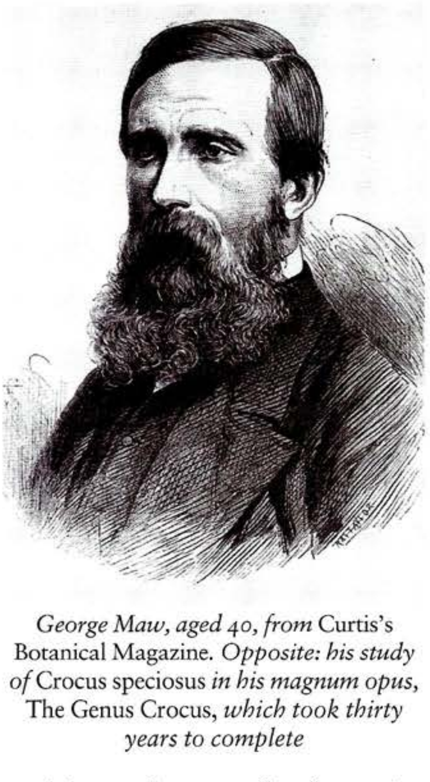
Crockery and crocuses
THE PASSIONS OF A VICTORIAN ENTHUSIAST

IN TURKEY THE TIRELESS GEORGE MAW WAS ABLE TO INDULGE IN BOTH HIS LOVES. HE FOUND INSPIRATION FOR THE DECORATIVE TILES MADE BY HIS FAMILY POTTERY. AND HE DISCOVERED THE PLANTS THAT INSPIRED HIS MAGNIFICENT BOOK ON CROCUSES. BY MARTYN AND ALISON RIX

"What an indomitable worker you are in many subjects!" wrote Charles Darwin to George Maw in 1869. Maw was indeed remarkable: first and foremost a successful businessman, he was also an archaeologist, botanist and geologist. Little known today, he epitomises the successful Englishman of the Victorian era: confident, dynamic, almost naively enthusiastic, a keen and observant traveller, interested in everything and blessed with business acumen. He was also a very competent artist, a talent shown to great advantage in his magnificent book, *The Genus Crocus*, published in 1886.

George was born in London in 1832, the son of John Hornby Maw, owner of a pharmaceutical business, who moved his young family from London to Hastings, where he became a keen watercolourist and collector. George and his siblings grew up with a lively artistic and social life and an appreciation of art and design that was to stand them in good stead.

By 1849 the family had moved to Bideford, North Devon, where Maw Senior took an interest in the local pottery, particularly the processes by which decorative tiles were made. His daughter, Anne Mary Wood, recorded in her diary at this time: "It struck my father that it would not be difficult to imitate ancient encaustic tiles." The family also experimented with designs traced in local churches, which they then had fired by a local potter. According to Anne, her father saw in such work "the germ of the business for his boys."



George Maw, aged 40, from Curtis's Botanical Magazine. *Opposite: his study of* Crocus speciosus *in his magnum opus,* The Genus Crocus, *which took thirty years to complete*

Enthusiasm for the styles and patterns of the Middle Ages was growing at this time, encouraged by the fledgling Arts and Crafts movement, which extolled the value of honest work by small groups of craftsmen (or women) using simple materials. Among these groups producing handmade wares were the so-called "Art Potteries". Later, when Liberty's opened in London, an Art pottery in Devon supplied the store with rather crudely made, brightly coloured ceramics, which sold in the main to newly rich industrialists, who felt little allegiance to the more restrained classical tastes of the established upper class. Ironically, it was not until the Arts and Crafts style was mass-produced by these same industrialists – against whose methods of factory production the movement had originally been a reaction – that goods in the new style became available at more modest prices to ordinary people.

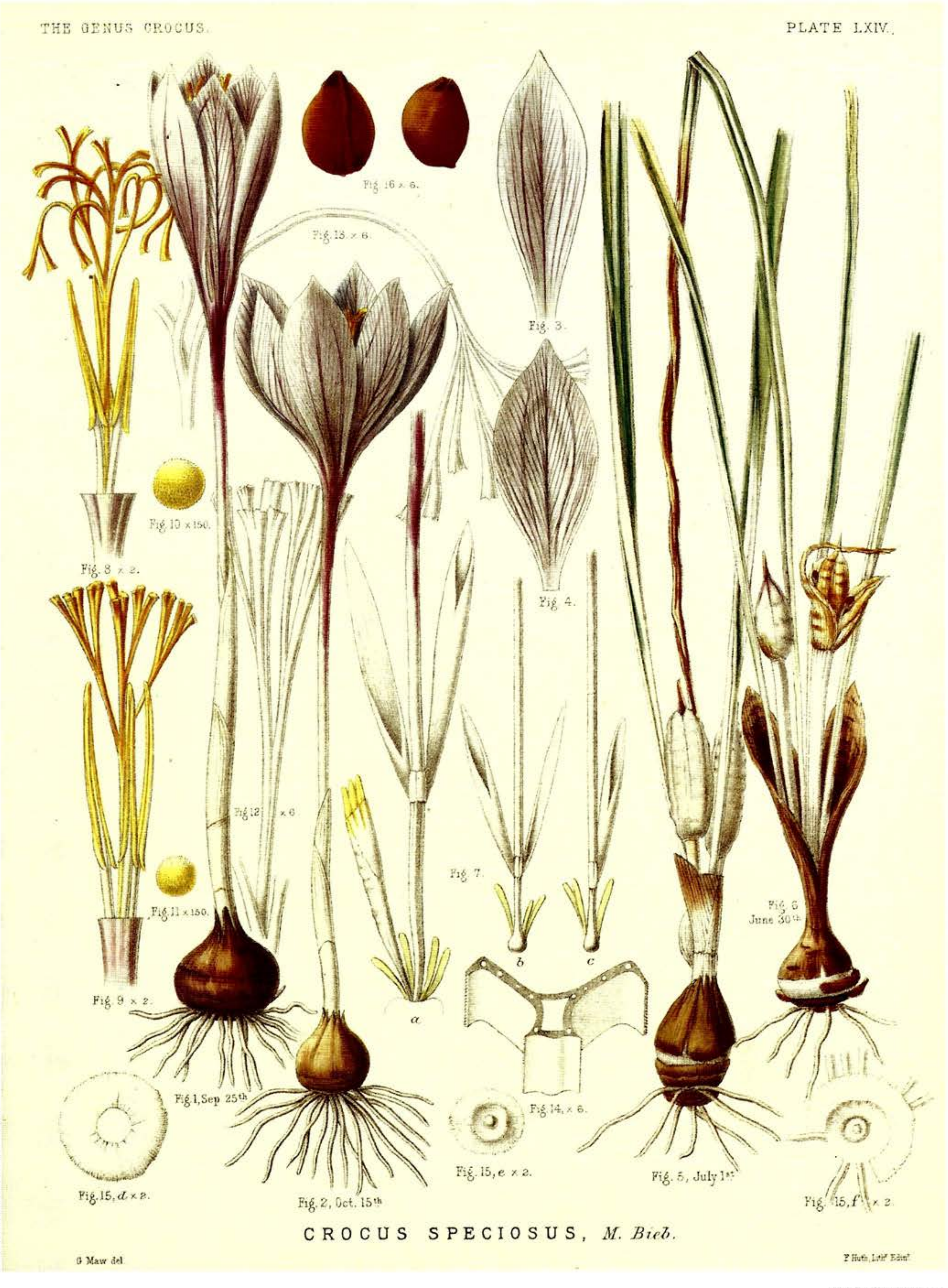
In 1850 the Maw family moved once more, this time to Worcester, where John Maw took over the old Chamberlain's Worcester tile factory and began, with the help of his sons George and Arthur, to produce floor and wall tiles in the mock-medieval style, and also increasingly in the Hispano-Moresque and Persian (or Turkish) style.

The Great Exhibition of 1851, held at the Crystal Palace in London, gave encouragement to such enterprises, and by 1852 the Maw family had moved the short distance to Benthall Hall, a handsome sixteenth-century house above the River Severn in nearby Broseley, Shropshire. Here a new pottery was constructed incorporating all the latest technology, and the business of ceramic and tile manufacture began in earnest.

The conditions were right for success: cheap labour was available, there was a plentiful supply of clay and coal, and the newly developed railway system allowed commercial potteries to distribute their wares with ease. Companies such as Minton and Maw satisfied the growing demand from the burgeoning middle class, whose large, solid villas were decorated with tiled floors and fireplaces, brightly coloured pitchers and ewers, and pictorial and commemorative wares.

The policy of free trade and the development of steamships allowed not only the import and export of goods, but also unprecedented personal travel and a consequent exposure to new ideas from abroad. Maw & Co were able to ship their products around the globe with relative ease and were well placed to exploit the British taste for foreign styles.

Goods in the Persian (loosely applied) or Turkish taste were particularly


THE GENUS CROCUS.
PLATE LXIV.
Fig 16 × 6.
Fig. 13 × 6
Fig. 3.
Fig. 4.
Fig. 10 × 150.
Fig. 8 × 2.
Fig 12 × 6
Fig. 7.
b
c
a
Fig. 11 × 150.
Fig. 9 × 2.
Fig 1, Sep 25th
Fig 14 × 6.
Fig. 6
June 30th
Fig. 15, d × 2.
Fig. 2, Oct. 15th
Fig. 15, e × 2.
Fig. 5, July 1st
Fig. 15, f × 2.

CROCUS SPECIOSUS, *M. Bieb.*

G Maw del.

F Huth, Lith' Edin'

ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS KEW

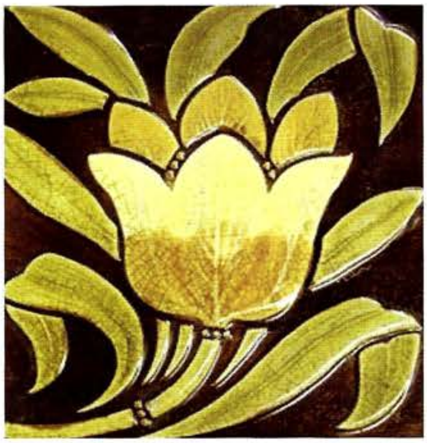
JOHN RUSKIN, WITH WHOM MAW HAD CORRESPONDED, HAD BEEN CRITICAL OF SOME OF MAW'S

popular: Turkey carpets, Turkish cigarettes and Turkish baths became widespread. English designers such as Walter Crane, who began working for Maw & Co in 1874, Owen Jones (author of *Plans, Elevations and Sections of the Alhambra* and the influential *The Grammar of Ornament*) and William de Morgan frequently incorporated in their work Eastern motifs inspired by Iznik, "Persian" or "Rhodian" ware. Foliage and flowers – pinks, cornflowers, almond blossom and tulips – were particularly admired. Maw & Co employed some of these designers directly, but may also have indulged in a certain amount of plagiarism, although this is hard to prove; de Morgan himself wittily remarked that "imitation is the sincerest form of pottery".

By 1862, Maw & Co were ready to exhibit their wares, particularly "Moorish" tiles, at the International Exhibition in the Crystal Palace, and the company continued to grow. Thanks to the success of the factory, George was now able to indulge his love of travel and his interests in botany, geology and pottery. Between 1869 and 1878 he visited Portugal and nearly all the mountainous areas of Morocco and southern Europe as far as the eastern side of Turkey, searching for plants, particularly crocus, and examples of ceramics.

Fortunately, his friends and correspondents often shared his interests, as illustrated by this exchange with Sir Joseph Hooker, Director of the Royal Gardens at Kew. It begins prosaically enough. In answer to Maw's rather persistent proposals to construct earthenware "tallies" (labels) for the plants, Hooker writes on June 15, 1868: "Dear Sir, I have received your sample of tallies – the subject of earthenware tallies has lately engaged much of my time, and I have been having experiments made by Josiah Wedgwood, who has turned out a capital article for us in several patterns, in white-ware."

By October 15 the subject had turned to the production of Maw's book of crocuses: "The coloured plates are most exquisite, but I fear that the process is far too expensive for Botanical works of which so very few copies are required that Hand colouring is the cheapest plan by far."


One of *Maw & Co's* stylised floral tiles

THE IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUMS

A few days later, Maw sent the Hookers a present of some vases. The next summer Sir Joseph, just returned from the St Petersburgh Show, thanked Maw for "the superb specimens of Fez and Teheran crockery that greeted me on entering my study".

He was full of praise: "Our house is now in a state of transition and when I order [it] again I shall give place of honour to these fine pieces of native taste – they are highly decorative.

"Mr Layard fell in love with the Japanese vases you gave Mrs Hooker & would hear all about them. I told him that I would ask you whether they were on sale."

Maw subsequently became friendly with Layard, a man after his own heart. Mr (later Sir) Austen Henry Layard was an archaeologist, artist, diplomat and liberal politician who had been brought up in Italy, lived and worked in Constantinople and carried out important excavations in Persia funded by the British Museum. A man of pronounced opinions, Layard was a staunch supporter of the Ottoman Empire, distrustful of British policy in the region, who demonstrated his commitment to Turkey by founding the Ottoman Bank in 1856. Layard was appointed ambassador to Madrid in 1869 and Constantinople in 1877, and in both posts he was able to help Maw in his search for pottery and plants.

By 1869 Maw had visited Corsica and Morocco, where he purchased some pottery in Tangier and Tetuan, "some of it very fine in style". By the following year he had met Hooker and another botanist, John Ball, the first president of the Alpine Club, at the Pottery Courts of the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum), to plan a trip to the High Atlas Mountains. The chief objective was to study the alpine flora; the three later published their results in *Journal of a Tour in Marocco and the Great Atlas* (1878), to which Maw contributed an appendix, including a sketch of the geology of Morocco.

As usual, Maw managed to combine several interests, purchasing some Fez pottery, which "combines elegance and variety of form with vigorous geometrical designs and rough execution". He was also busy sending plants to Hooker for illustration by the long-suffering Fitch, principal artist of *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*.

In 1871, Maw & Co once again exhibited at the annual International Exhibition in London, this time adding to their range of tiles in the Moorish style some of the original pieces purchased by Maw on his visit to Morocco, a number of which he later donated to the V&A.

When not travelling, Maw spent time in his garden at Benthall. He was particularly interested in alpines and bulbs of all kinds, and went to huge lengths to provide the best possible conditions for his plants, constructing sunken frames to simulate their natural habitat. By 1872, William Robinson, the well-known garden writer, described the garden as "cultivated with no common skill". The collection grew to include plants such as a *Chionodoxa*, which Maw had found near Smyrna (Izmir) and exhibited at the Royal Horticultural Society in 1879; *Draba mawii*, from the Sierra Nevada in Spain, *Saxifraga maweana* from a mountain above Tetuan (both species named in his honour by Hooker), and numerous crocuses and lilies either brought back from abroad or sent to him by his many friends and correspondents.

Maw was generous in reciprocating, as one can see from letters of acknowledgment such as this from Layard in Constantinople:

"The bulbs arrived safely and were

TILES BUT DESCRIBED THE CROCUS PLATES AS 'MOST EXQUISITE... AND QUITE BEYOND CRITICISM'

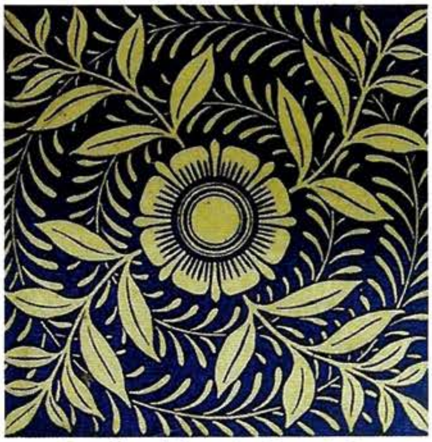
planted immediately by the Embassy Gardener who promises to look after them. Mrs Layard and myself are much obliged to you for them." Layard goes on to congratulate Maw "on your success in reproducing the old Spanish lustres".

After many years of writing articles on crocus for publications such as *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, and delivering lectures to the Linnean Society and the Royal Horticultural Society, Maw finally started work in earnest on his magnum opus, *The Genus Crocus*, which had been under discussion for some time.

As early as January 1875, Hooker had written suggesting "what a charming book one on *Crocus* would make. Could you not join Baker in bringing one out...? I would gladly put all Gay's drawings at your service...".

In March Hooker was still enthusiastic, if cautious:

"...Baker will gladly undertake the letter press of a work on *Croci* with Gay's drawings if published. I fear however the expense of a really good publication of these what [*sic*] Reeve & Co. would not undertake. To do justice to Gay's collection of Drawings would be a worthy affair; they are exquisite & the drawing and colouring of the *Bot. Mag.* would not do them justice. There are 90 of them & after going into the matter with Baker, we feel sure that 120 colour plates would be required to do justice to the genus. Where is the money to come from? It would take a large number of subscribers to pay for so precious a work, & at a large price..."

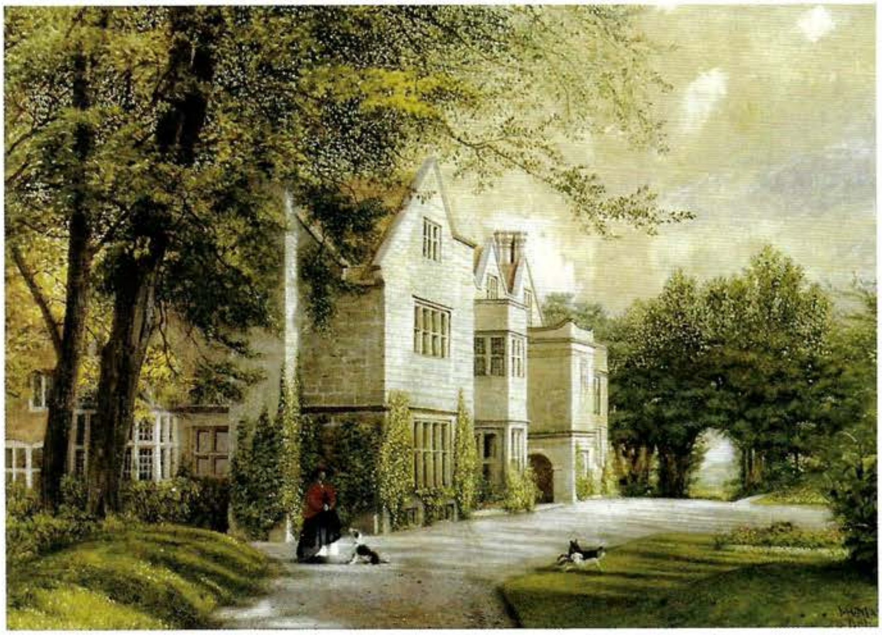

Sprialling foliage, by Maw & Co

THE IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUMS

By the next week, however, all such considerations were laid aside as Maw received a letter of condolence on the death of his "little child". For a time the book's progress ground to a halt.

It was eventually published by Dulau and Co of Soho Square in 1886, at which time Maw wrote: "The preparation of this work has pleasantly occupied my spare hours from business during the last eight years."

A handsome volume, it contains an informative text, often with detailed notes of where the plant was collected, and by whom, an appendix on the etymology of the words crocus and saffron by C C Lacaita, a fellow member of the Linnean Society, sixty-seven beautifully coloured plates, and a number of vignettes engraved from sketches by Maw's friend Mr Danford, to whom, with his wife, the book is dedicated.


At Benthall Hall Maw spent time devising the right conditions for all sorts of plants brought back from his travels, from the Sierra Nevada to the hills of Izmir

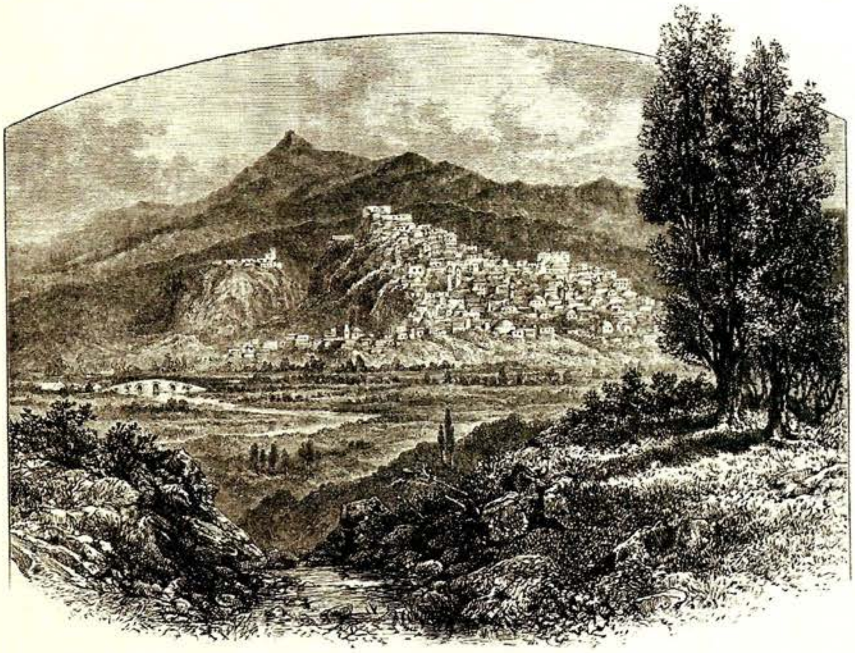
NTPL/JOHN HAMMOND

It is an extraordinary work, a testimony to Maw's powers of observation, and carried out with an artist's sense of design. Plates at the beginning of the book show in minute detail the germination of seeds of *Crocus aureus* from Broussa (Bursa), with dissections of pollen grains, stamens and corm reproduction all depicted and coloured in delicately. The major part of the book is given over to descriptions of the species and their variants, each beautifully illustrated with colour plates. One of Maw's nieces reported that only twenty-seven copies of the book were printed, and that her uncle had coloured all the plates himself. John Ruskin, with whom Maw had corresponded, had been critical of some of Maw's tiles, but described the crocus plates as "most exquisite... and quite beyond criticism".

At the beginning of the book are introductory chapters on the history and cultivation of crocuses, in which Maw writes:

"It is probable that there are yet many undescribed species to be discovered and introduced. Asia Minor is the metropolis of the genus; and I would especially point out to travellers, the southern part of Asia Minor, between Syria and Lycia, as being likely to afford new species. The northeastern extremity of Cyprus, the Taurus, Kurdistan, north west Persia, and the district east of the Caspian have been little explored, and are likely to afford new species. Should travellers meet with any Crocuses in these districts, I shall be grateful if they will transmit them to me."

Then appears a wish list of "species not yet introduced, or lost to cultivation, the roots of which are much desired by the author", along



Angora, Asia Minor.
From a drawing by C. G. Danford, Esq.

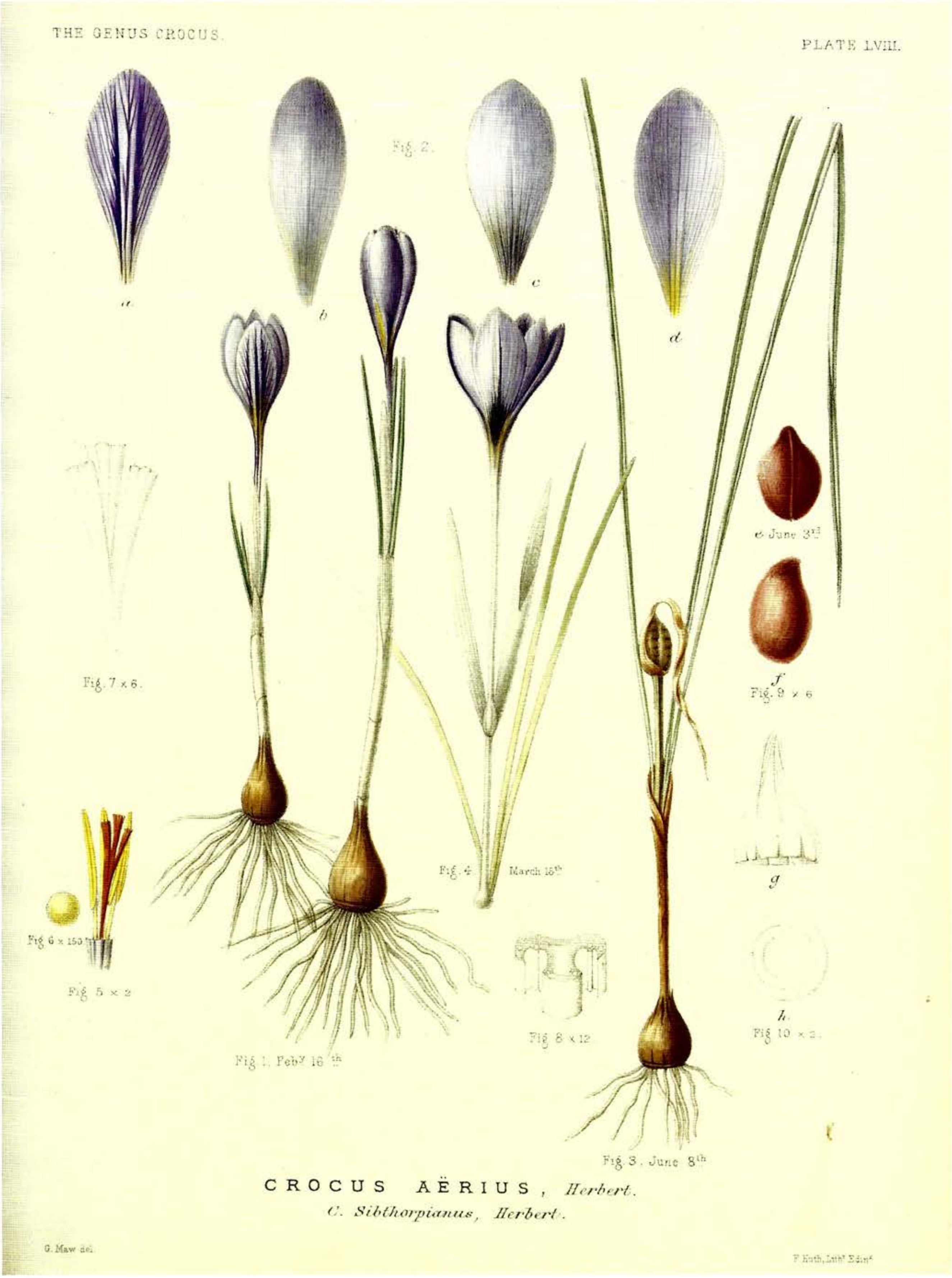
38. CROCUS ANCYRENSIS.

Section: Nudiflori; reticulati *(Herbert)*: Holostigma; vernal *(Baker)*.

Crocus ancyrensis, G. Maw, Synops. Genus Crocus in Gard. Chron., new ser., vol. xvi, p. 528; in The Garden, vol. xxi, no. 532, p. 68; and Hist. Crocus in Journ. Linn. Soc., Bot., vol. xix, p. 373; Boiss., Fl. Orient. vol. v, part 1, p. 104.

C. reticulatus, var. 5, *ancyrensis*, Herbert, Hist. Crocus, p. 33, sp. 32, var. 5; from Journ. Hort. Soc., vol. ii, p. 279.

The Genus Crocus *contains not only Maw's beautiful paintings but drawings of many locations where Maw found plants. In 1847 Ancyra (previously Angora, now Ankara) had given its name to the newly discovered yellow spring-flowering* Crocus ancyrensis, *used in some areas as a foodstuff. Crocuses, including* C. biflorus, *still grow in the hills around Ankara*


THE GENUS CROCUS.
PLATE LVIII.
Fig. 2.
a
b
c
d
e June 3rd
f
Fig. 9 × 6
Fig. 7 × 6.
Fig 6 × 150
Fig 5 × 2
Fig. 4
March 15th
g
Fig 8 × 12
h
Fig 10 × 2
Fig 1. Feby 16th
Fig. 3. June 8th
CROCUS AËRIUS, Herbert.
C. Sibthorpianus, Herbert.
G. Maw del.
F. Huth, Lithr Edinr

Thanks to detailed study by Brian Mathew, we now know that this painting, labelled 'Crocus aerius', *in fact shows the* pulchricolor *subspecies of the very variable* Crocus biflorus, *which is found on high ground in western Turkey, from Bolu and Bursa south to Ankara. The true* Crocus aerius *is shown in the painting Maw calls* 'Crocus biliottii'

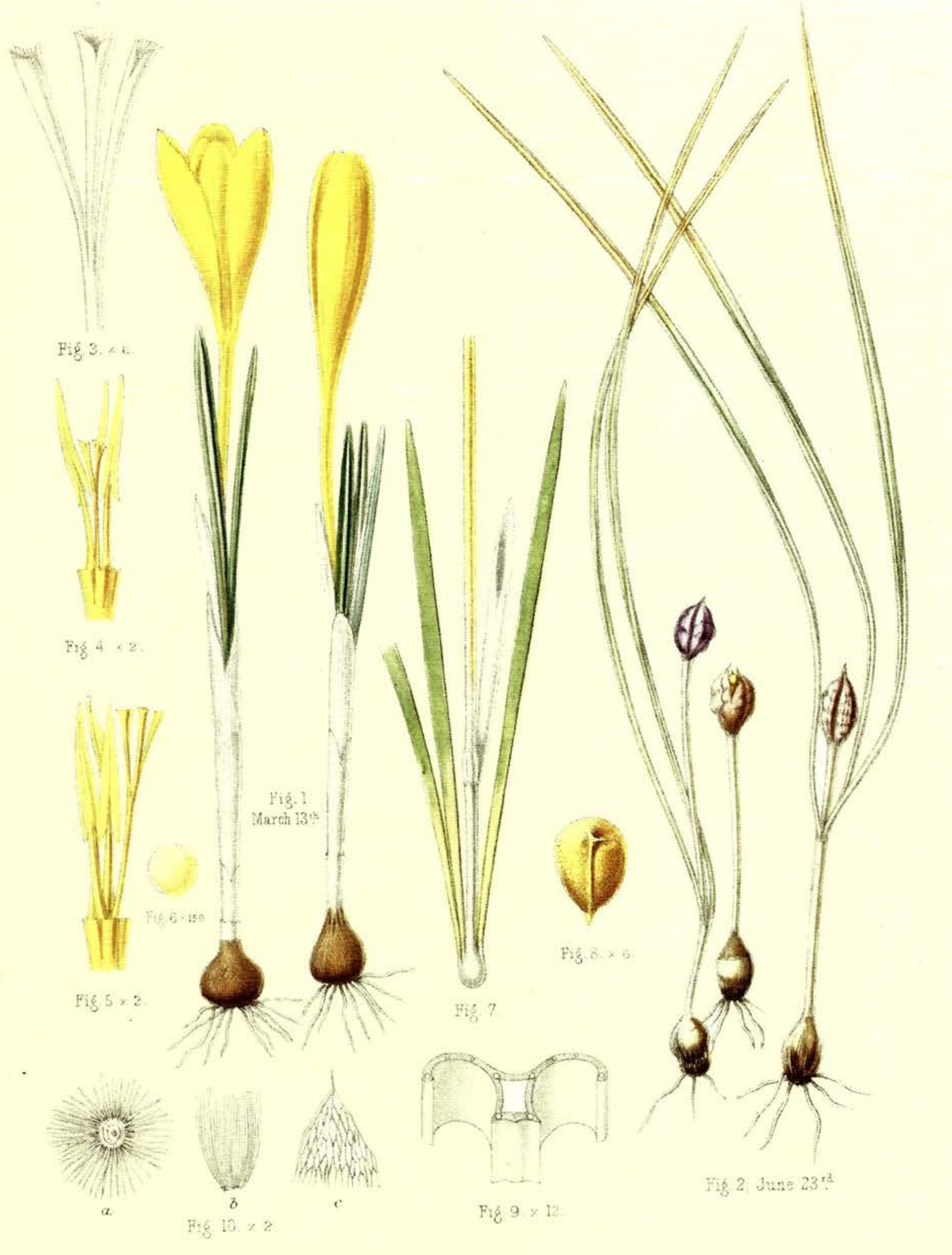


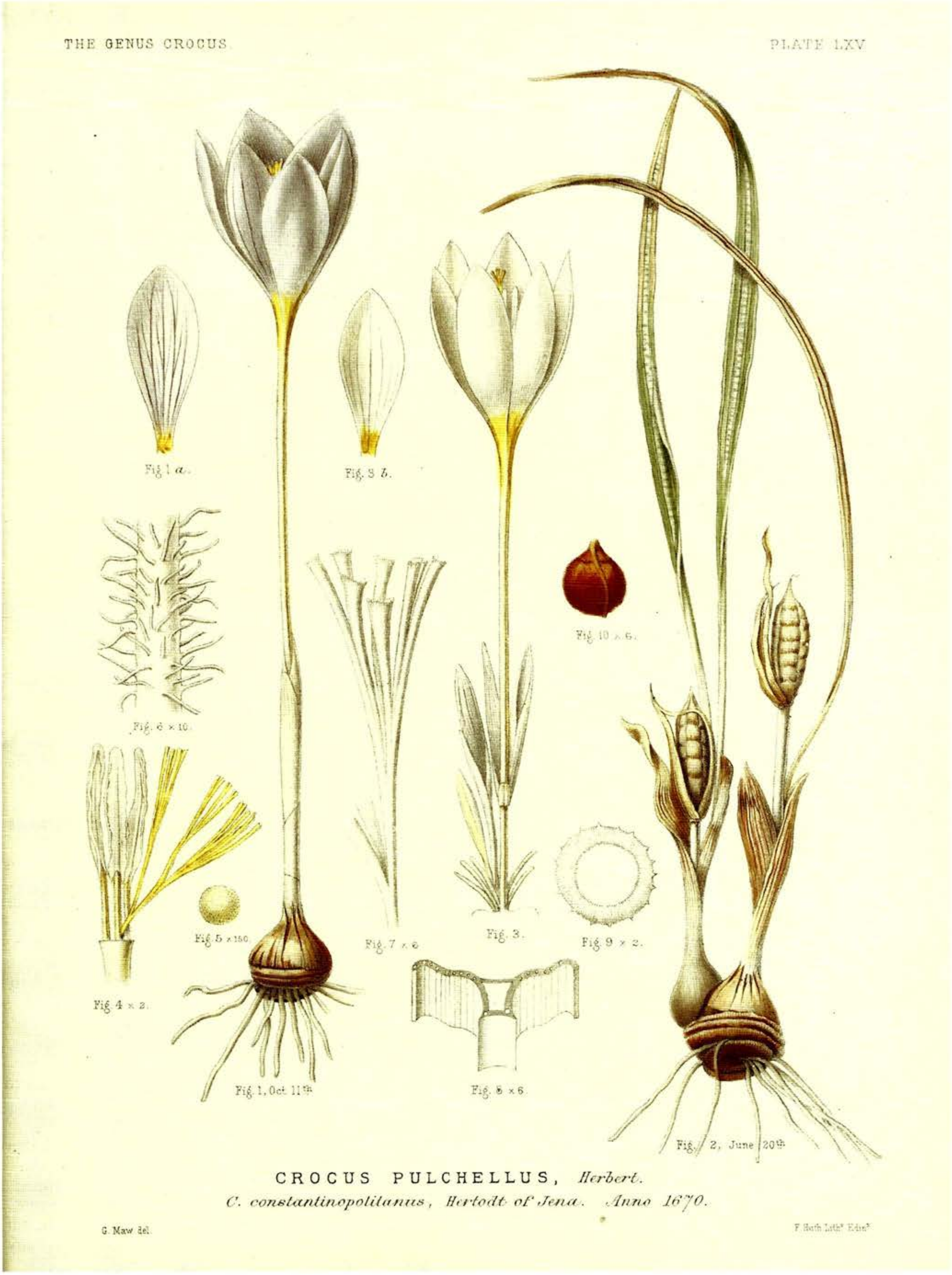
Fig. 3. × 6.
Fig. 4. × 2.
Fig. 5 × 2.
Fig. 6 × 150
Fig. 1 March 13th
Fig. 7
Fig. 8. × 6.
Fig. 2. June 23rd
a
b
c
Fig. 10. × 2.
Fig. 9. × 12.

CROCUS GARGARICUS, *Herbert.*

C. Thirkeanus, K. Koch.

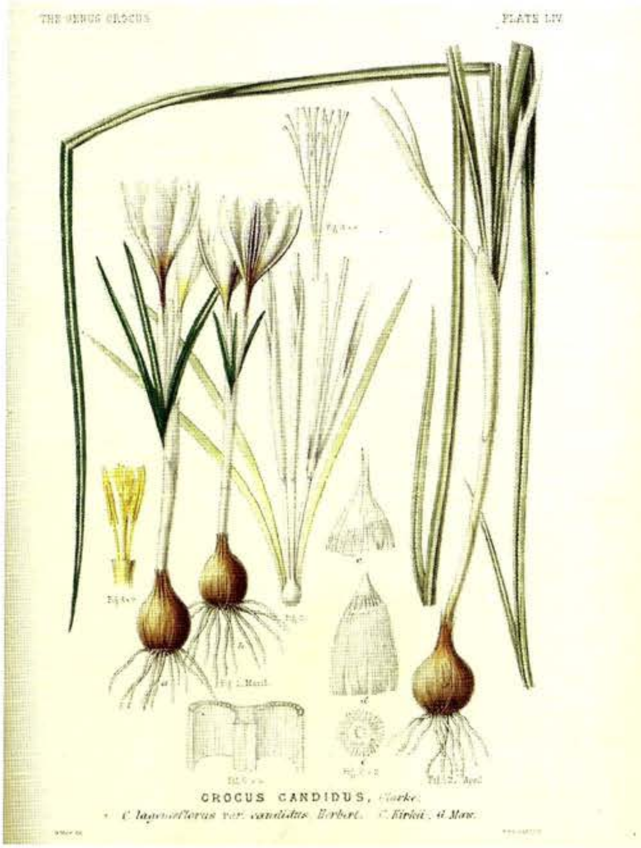
G. Maw, del.
F. Huth, Lith' Edin'

Crocus gargaricus *is a dwarf, spring-flowering crocus found only in western Turkey. 'I gathered it abundantly on the Bithynian Olympus [present-day Uludağ] above Broussa [Bursa],' wrote Maw. 'It flowers freely with me at Benthall in the early spring, both in the open air and under the protection of a cold frame'*

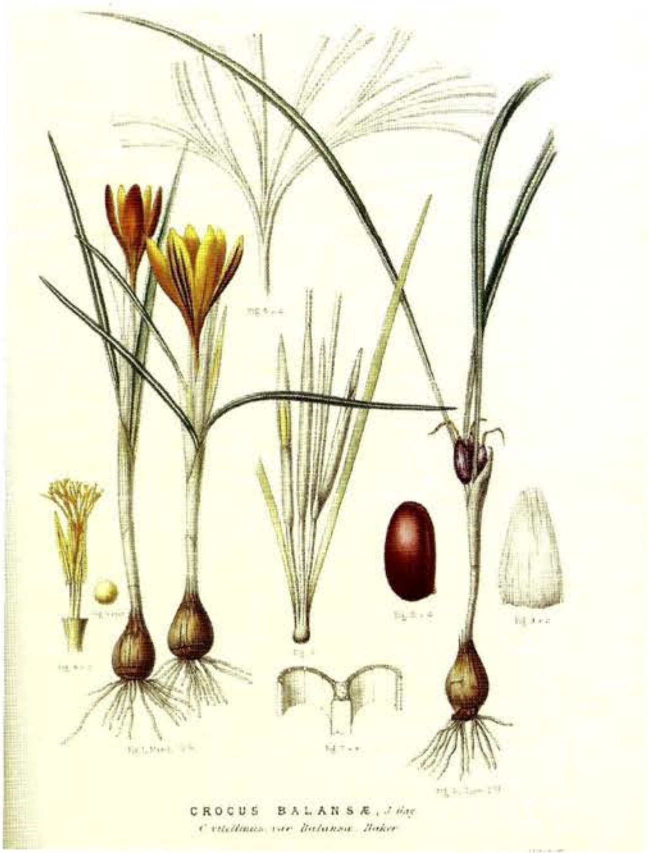

THE GENUS CROCUS
PLATE LXV
Fig. 1 a.
Fig. 3 b.
Fig. 6 × 10.
Fig. 10 × 6.
Fig. 4 × 2.
Fig. 5 × 150.
Fig. 7 × 6
Fig. 3.
Fig. 9 × 2.
Fig. 1, Oct. 11th
Fig. 8 × 6.
Fig. 2, June 20th
CROCUS PULCHELLUS, Herbert.
C. constantinopolitanus, Hertodt of Jena. Anno 1670.
G. Maw del.
F. Huth Lithr Edinr

Crocus pulchellus, *a delicate, autumn-flowering crocus with short-lived flowers, some pale purple, some white, still grows in old gardens along the Bosphorus. "As an ornamental garden plant few Crocuses are more desirable or attractive..." wrote Maw in* The Genus Crocus. *It was first described by William Herbert in 1841*

PLATES REPRODUCED COURTESY OF ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, KEW



'It is a native of The Troad...discovered there by Dr E D Clarke in the spring of 1806, on the flanks of Mt Gargarus, one of the heights of Mt Ida [Kazdağı],' wrote Maw of C. candidus, *easily recognised by its wide leaves and white flowers with a yellow throat*

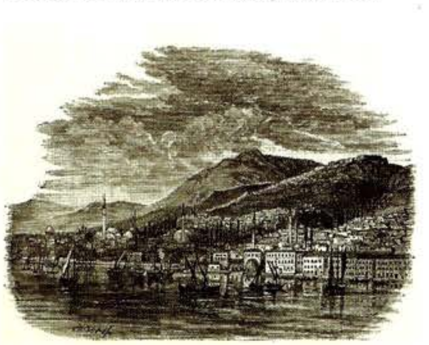


The striped Crocus balansae *is now considered a subspecies of the commoner* C. olivieri. *Maw's account holds good: 'It is limited to western Asia Minor, and is abundant on the Hippurite Limestone plateau between Smyrna and the Taktali Dagh range'*

with detailed directions to the places where they should be found. An example is *Crocus parviflorus*, "discovered by Mrs Danford... on a steep earthy slope under Fir woods, about a mile to the southeast of Anascha, in the Cilician Taurus, at an altitude of about four thousand feet. The only existing specimens are in the Kew Herbarium".

Maw was generous in acknowledging the help he had received: "Besides a considerable number [of crocuses] collected by Mr Elwes and myself in the south of Europe, North Africa, the Mediterranean Islands, the Levant and Asia Minor, I have been largely indebted to the kindness of many friends as well as to residents abroad, to whom I am personally unknown, for the willing help they have rendered me in the collection of nearly all the known species, many of them till now undescribed, from remote districts. I have thus been enabled to grow in my garden at Benthall Hall, Shropshire, almost the entire genus, to watch the life-course of each species, and to make at my leisure the drawings of the plants, both in fruit and in flower, which have been here reproduced in the coloured plates."

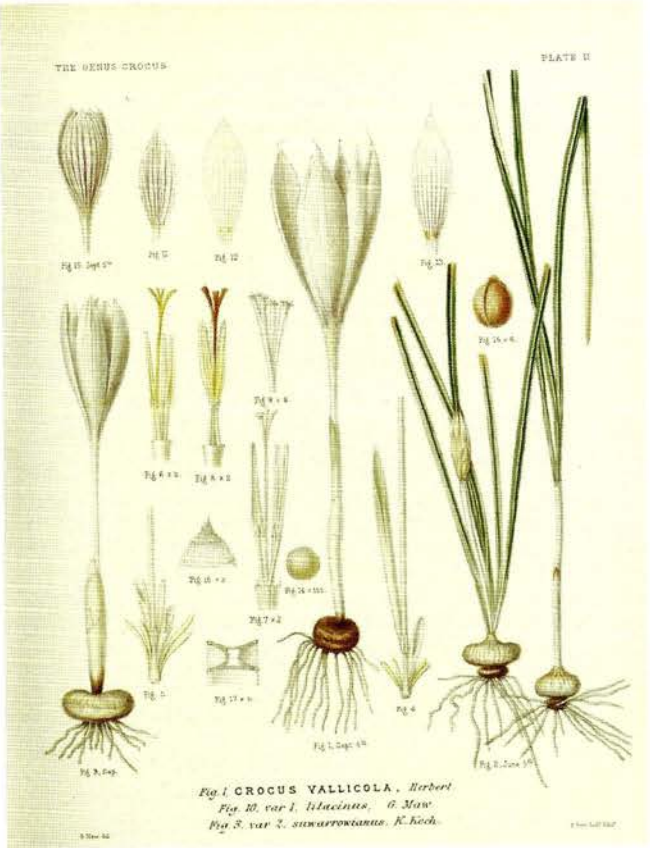
Mr Elwes was Henry Elwes, after whom the snowdrop *Galanthus elwesii* is named. A wealthy Englishman and keen traveller, he had an interest in natural history as great or even greater than Maw's. Others mentioned include Sir Alfred Biliotti, archaeologist and British consul in Trabzon, who had found painted vases in excavated tombs on Rhodes and helped to obtain plants for Maw (*Crocus biliottii*, discovered near Stauros, was named after him), and Mr Gavin Gatheral, vice-consul at Smyrna, who sent Maw "a liberal supply" of the attractive yellow *Crocus ancyrensis*, used as a foodstuff at Sivas.



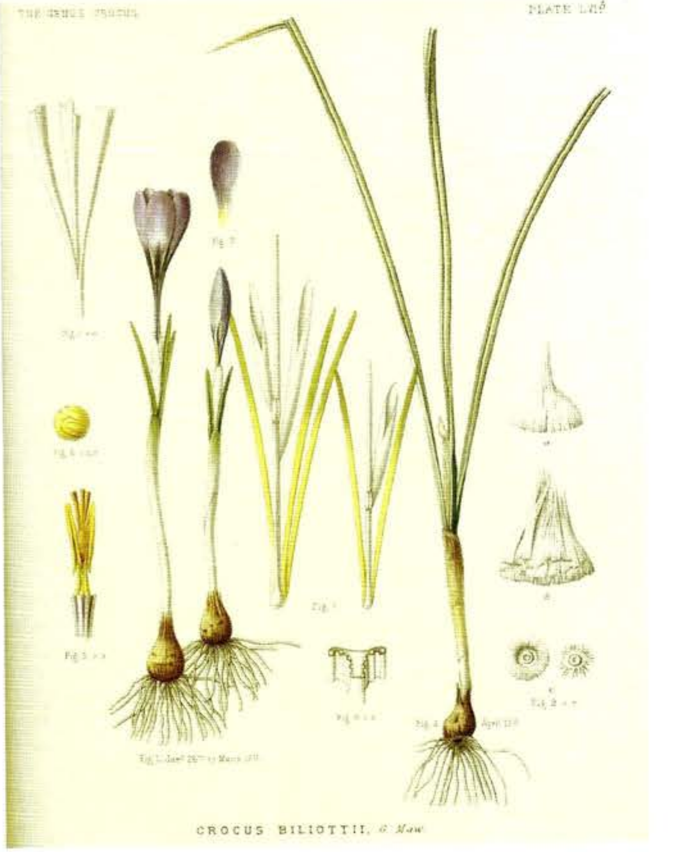
The hills surrounding Izmir (Smyrna) were excellent for bulbs, and the city, with its large English colony, later became the centre for the export of wild bulbs such as snowdrops and cyclamen

Of the Danfords, to whom the book is dedicated, he writes that their journeys "throughout the length and breadth of Asia Minor in the years 1876, 1878 and 1879, added much to the knowledge of the distribution of Crocuses in that district. Many of the vignettes appearing in the present book have been engraved from original sketches made by Mr Danford in the remote mountain region of the Taurus and other parts of Asia Minor ..." What is not clear is whether Maw drew the sketches for some of the other engravings himself. Judging from his sketchbooks, he would have been perfectly capable of doing so, but we have so far been unable to find any evidence to support this.

Mrs Danford was obviously an indefatigable collector. Maw is

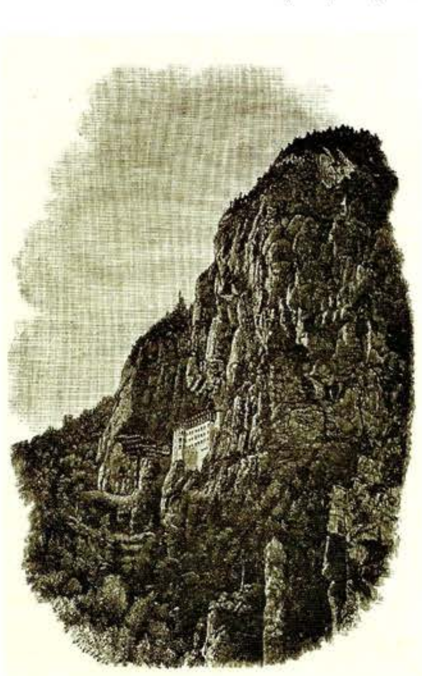

THE GENUS CROCUS
PLATE II
Fig. I. CROCUS VALLICOLA, Herbert
Fig. 10. var I. lilacinus, G. Maw
Fig. 3. var 2. suwarrowianus, K. Koch

In September and October Crocus vallicola *is conspicuous in grassy meadows in the Black Sea mountains, from Trabzon to Rize. The flowers can be pure white or veined with purple. Maw shows the characteristic thread-like points on the tips of the petals*



Maw named this small plant C. biliotti *after Sir Alfred Biliotti, HM Consul at Trabzon, 'through whose instrumentality it was discovered' in May 1880. Unfortunately, Herbert had already named it* C. aerius *in 1847, from specimens collected in the same area*

ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS KEW



The Monastery of Sumela, built into a cliff in a hidden valley near Trabzon, was already a romantic ruin in Maw's day. C. aerius *was first discovered in these hills*

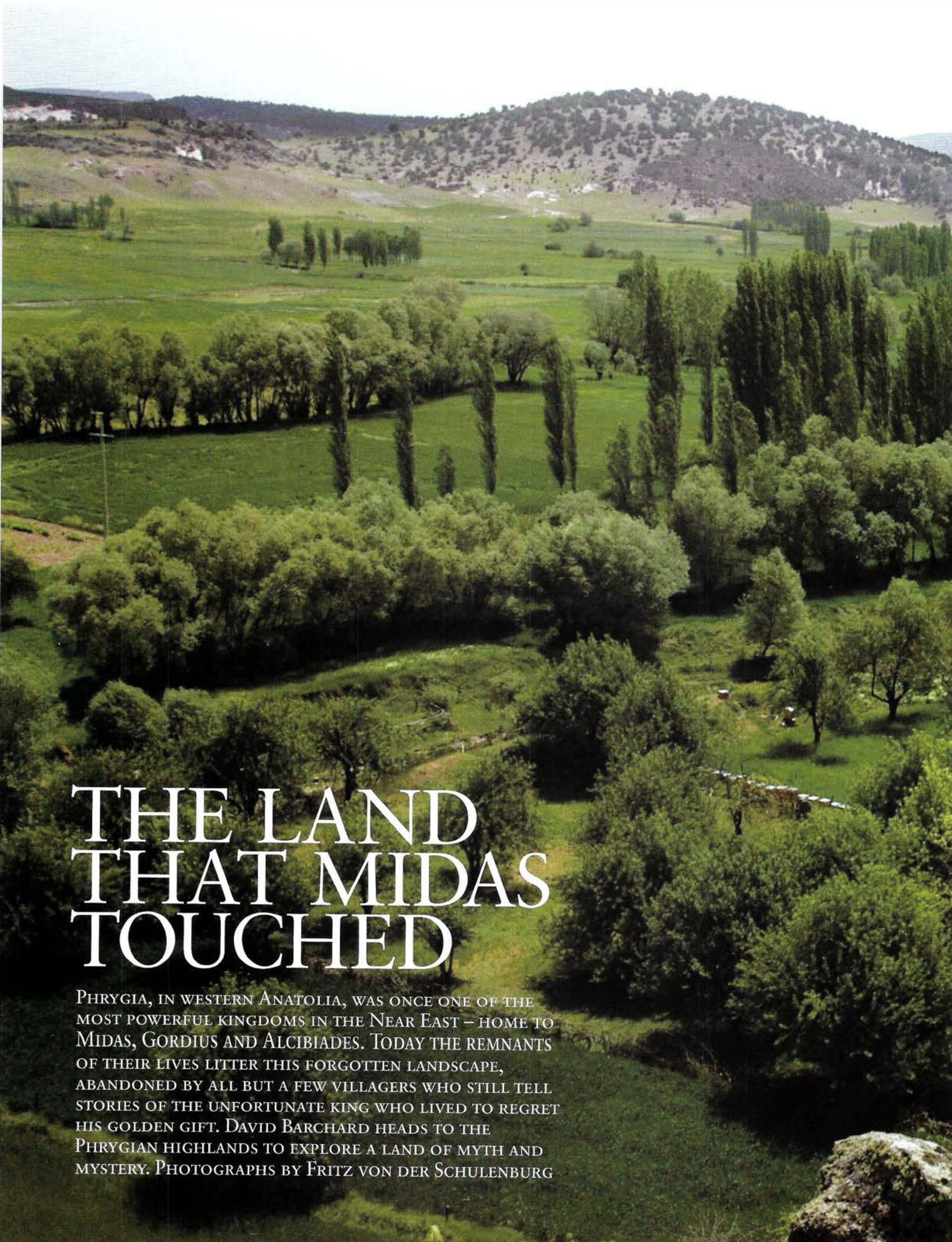
indebted to her "for the roots of several new species of *Crocus* discovered by her, and also for much valuable information respecting the habitats of *Crocuses* throughout Asia Minor". She is commemorated in the pretty but diminutive *Crocus danfordiae* from central and southern Turkey, which she first collected in the Antitaurus mountains in 1879.

While Maw was busy with his book, the Maw factory moved once again, this time to larger premises at nearby Jackfield, from where polychrome "Iznik" tiles were produced in large quantities, in competition with Minton, the firm's chief rival. Despite their huge commercial success, not everybody liked the mass-produced tiles and other objects, and some purists objected to the way the ceramics industry had been hijacked by capitalists. Gradually the fashion for bold colours and striking, sometimes rather crude designs waned.

By the end of the nineteenth century the enthusiasm for decorative tiles had started to move from the private house into the public domain, where they were appreciated more for their hygienic and hard-wearing than their aesthetic qualities. They were to be found in hospitals, railway station waiting rooms, shops, schools, cafés and public houses, and particularly in the "restored" churches.

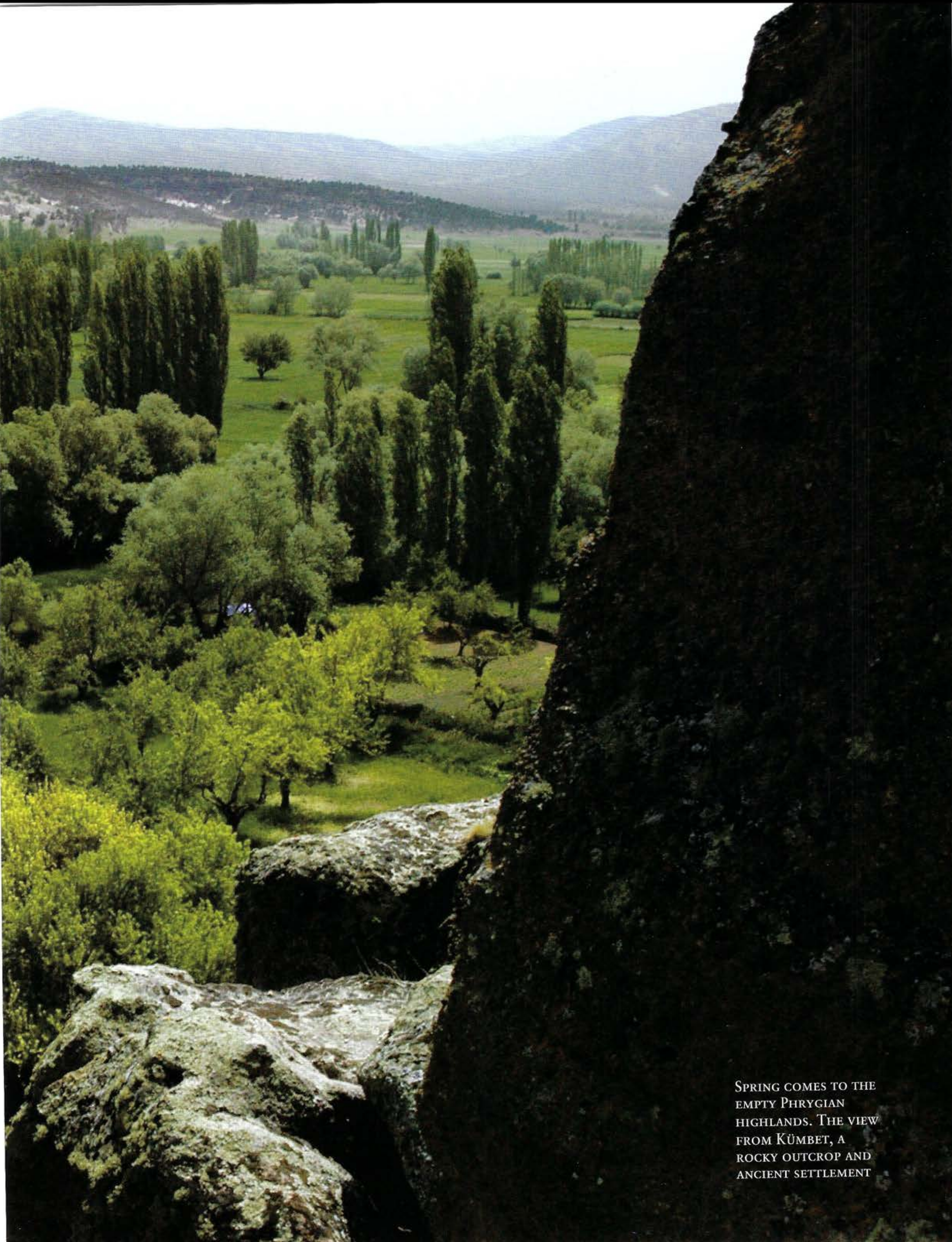
Maw moved from Benthall to Surrey in 1886 and lived on until 1912. The fortunes of Maw & Co gradually declined, defeated by cheap imports, but *The Genus Crocus* remains a fitting memorial to this extraordinary man. One of the few existing copies can still be seen today by the visitor to Benthall, who may also glimpse the tiles on the floor, produced in his factory, and the naturalised martagon lilies in the garden. ◆

Martyn Rix is a botanist and author, and the editor of *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*. He has contributed most recently to *Flowers of Anatolia*, by Fatih Orbay, available from www.cornucopia.net. Alison Rix is an editor and researcher, specialising in garden history and biography. The plates from *The Genus Crocus* are reproduced courtesy of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

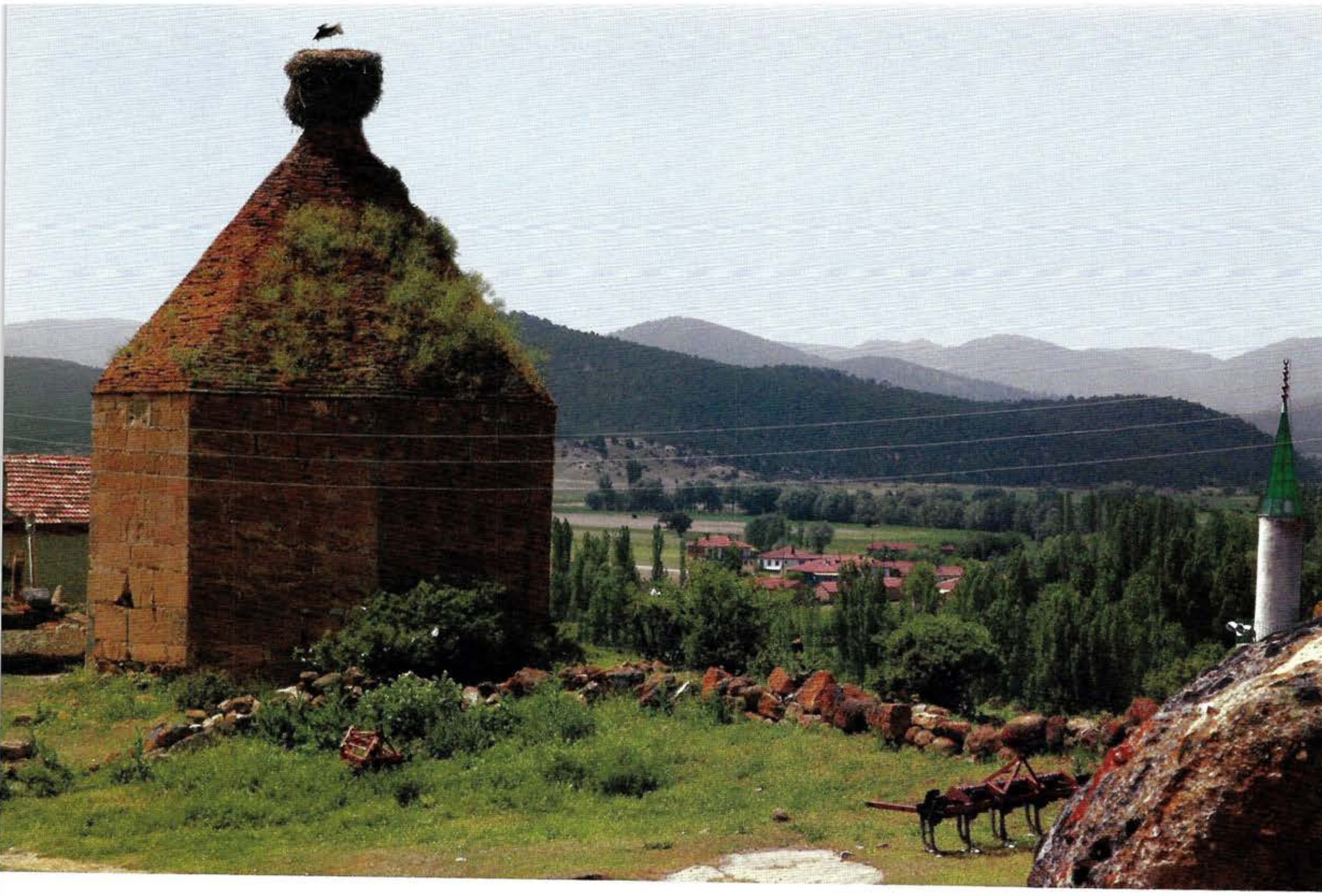


THE LAND THAT MIDAS TOUCHED

Phrygia, in western Anatolia, was once one of the most powerful kingdoms in the Near East – home to Midas, Gordius and Alcibiades. Today the remnants of their lives litter this forgotten landscape, abandoned by all but a few villagers who still tell stories of the unfortunate king who lived to regret his golden gift. David Barchard heads to the Phrygian highlands to explore a land of myth and mystery. Photographs by Fritz von der Schulenburg



Spring comes to the empty Phrygian highlands. The view from Kümbet, a rocky outcrop and ancient settlement



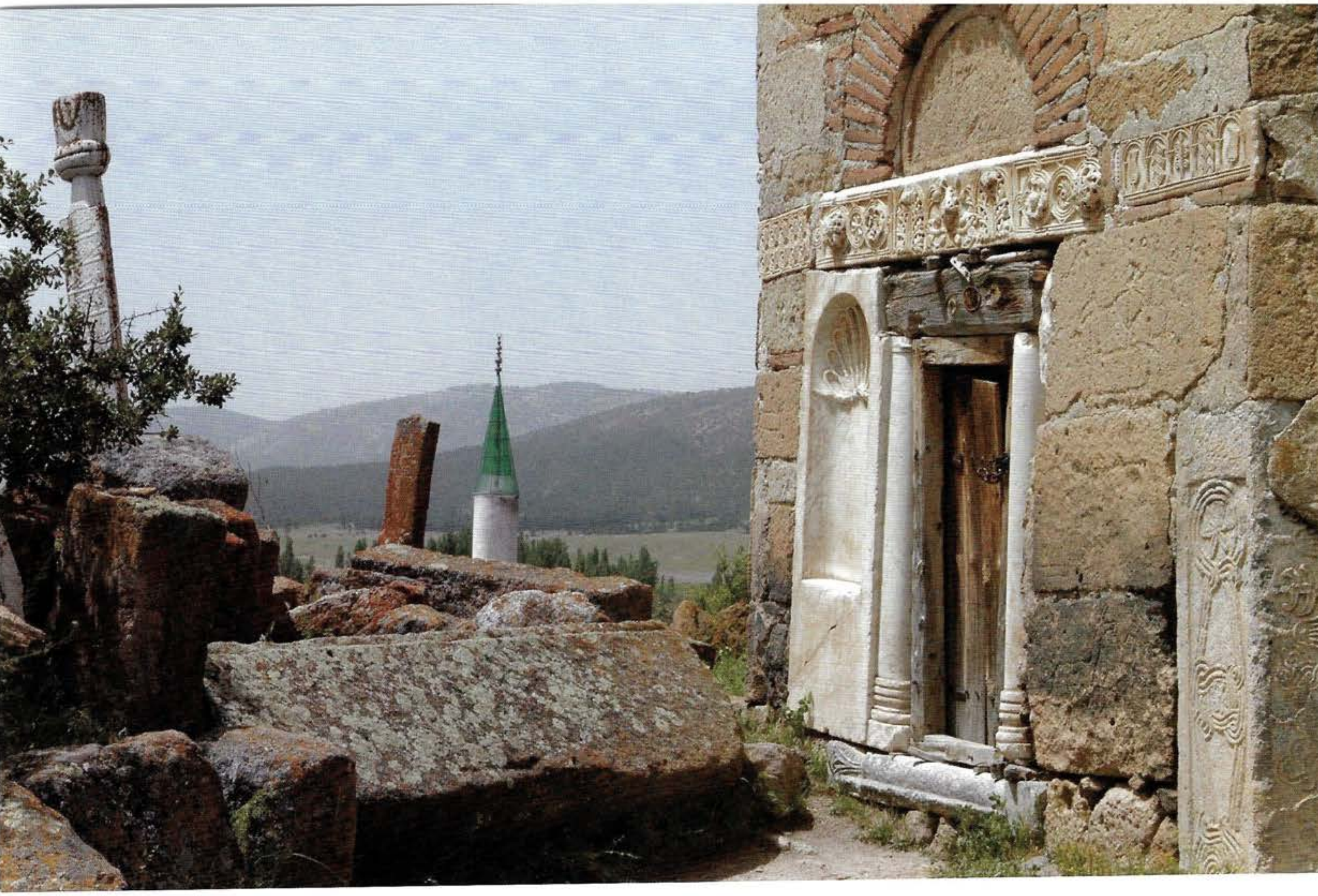
The landscape is green and idyllic. It might be the backdrop in a Renaissance oil painting of some myth from the ancient world – which, in a way, is exactly what it is. The kings and princes of this land turned to dust long ago, and now many of the villagers are leaving, too. A sense of timelessness hangs over the land. Everywhere along its roads one sees monuments and fragments, chunks hewn from a past that has almost assumed the status of legend: the times of Midas, Gordius, Alcibiades, and Seyyit Battal Gazi, the Romans, Seljuks and Ottomans.

This is Phrygia, one of the most beautiful and historic regions of Turkey, but a genuine case of a land that time and modernity have so far forgotten. Although the first ominous stirrings of tourism and development can be detected, as yet the bulldozers and construction machines have shown no signs of moving in.

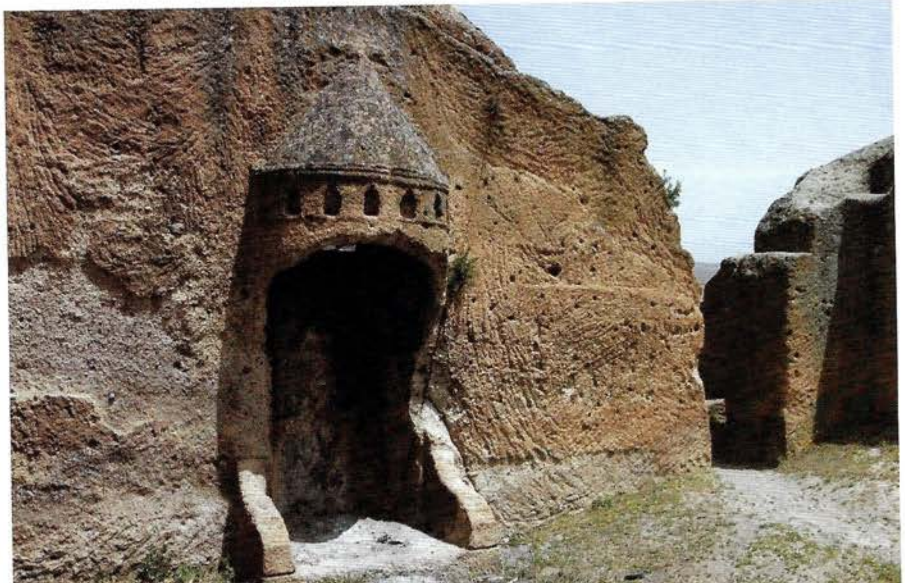
The name Phrygia, a purely historical and geographical label, comes from the Phrygians, a people who dominated western central Anatolia during most of the gap between the fall of the Hittites, just before 1150 BC, and about 690 BC, when they were conquered by the Cimmerians. For a while they were one of the most powerful kingdoms in the Near East, and the beauty of their little-known monuments and artefacts suggests that, had the dice of history rolled more kindly, they might have been a powerful influence on world art. As it is, because they wrote their documents on wooden tablets, which have crumbled to dust, we know very little about them, beyond what their Greek successors wrote down. We will probably never be able to put Phrygian history back together in the way we can with the clay-tablet-using Hittites.

Ankara, Turkey's modern capital but also one of its oldest cities, is almost certainly a Phrygian foundation: the gold-touching King Midas, most famous of all Phrygians, is said to have been born there. It was from Ankara that my friends and I drove out westwards one May morning last year. It took three or four hours along the highway before we reached the Phrygians. Yet we had been in Phrygia, at least as Midas knew it, all the time. For ancient Phrygia was a country with two souls, which are as different today as they ever were. Low Phrygia was the wide-open central Anatolian plain, while the Phrygian highlands were the empty and beautiful area between Seyitgazi and Afyon. The burgeoning Phrygian tourist industry, alas, gets its history wrong, dubbing the historical Phrygian highlands "the Phrygian Valley", which is exactly what they are not – unlike the denuded plains of lower Phrygia.

The highlands are full of trees, rocks and fragments of the past. On our particular May morning the young grass stood green and high in the fields; flowers danced everywhere and weighed down the branches of fruit



ABOVE: THE MAUSOLEUM, OR GÜMBET, WHICH GIVES THE VILLAGE OF KÜMBET ITS NAME (WITH RESIDENT STORK) REUSES DELICATELY CARVED BYZANTINE STONEWORK. THE WATTLE-AND-DAUB HOUSES OF KÜMBET HAVE BEEN ABANDONED AS THE MODERN AGE DRAINS THE COUNTRYSIDE OF ITS YOUNG PEOPLE. OPPOSITE: THE DOMES OF SEYITGAZI, WHERE AN 8TH-CENTURY HERO IS BURIED. BELOW: A HOODED FIREPLACE, ALL THAT REMAINS OF AN OLD PALACE OR MANSION HEWN OUT OF THE ROCK



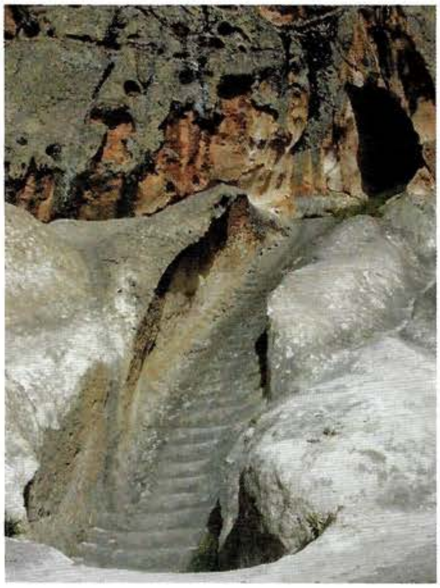
trees. Within less than 100 kilometres there is a startling variety of landscapes – this is the land of not just one legend but a whole series. One valley offers a small replica of Göreme and the rock cones of Cappadocia; another boasts rock monuments that might belong to *The Lord of the Rings*; in another a broken-down palace stands above a plain. Like an Islamic Shangri-La, splendid and triumphant, the former Bektashi *tekke,* or convent of Seyitgazi, rises serenely above its town.

Seyitgazi was once Roman Nacolea. In May 366 the would-be emperor Procopius, the last member of the dynasty of Constantine and Julian, was defeated and killed here by Valens. About four hundred years later, Seyyit Battal Gazi, a hero-warrior of the wars between Byzantium and Islam, was laid to rest alongside the girl who loved him – and who, according to legend, inadvertently killed him, by dropping a stone on his head from the top of Afyon Castle as she tried to warn him of an approaching enemy. A sign on her tomb names her as Leonara. Where do legends stop and facts begin? More recently, in 1922, Prince Andrew of Greece, father of the Duke of Edinburgh, was part of a Greek occupying army here, as he described in his memoirs, *Towards Disaster*.

South of Seyitgazi the towns cease for a hundred miles until you reach Afyon. Here, unlike in ancient times, there are only Phrygian mountains, forests and villages. In this entirely agricultural landscape the modern world is draining away the people and, as yet, bringing no newcomers. The village of Kümbet stands on a craggy outcrop, surveying

lush fields. Twelve years ago it was full of people. Now most are gone, and the roofs of their wattle-and-daub houses, inhabited when I was here in 1995, are falling in. We walked up a track, passable by car ten years ago but no longer. It might have been a different street, except that I recognised the wall at the end, with "*O şimdi asker*" ("He's in the army now") written on it. When I was last there, it had been newly written, witness to a recent farewell evening of high jinks before a villager went off to do his military service. Today the young people have left, and the jokey words are an inscription from another age.

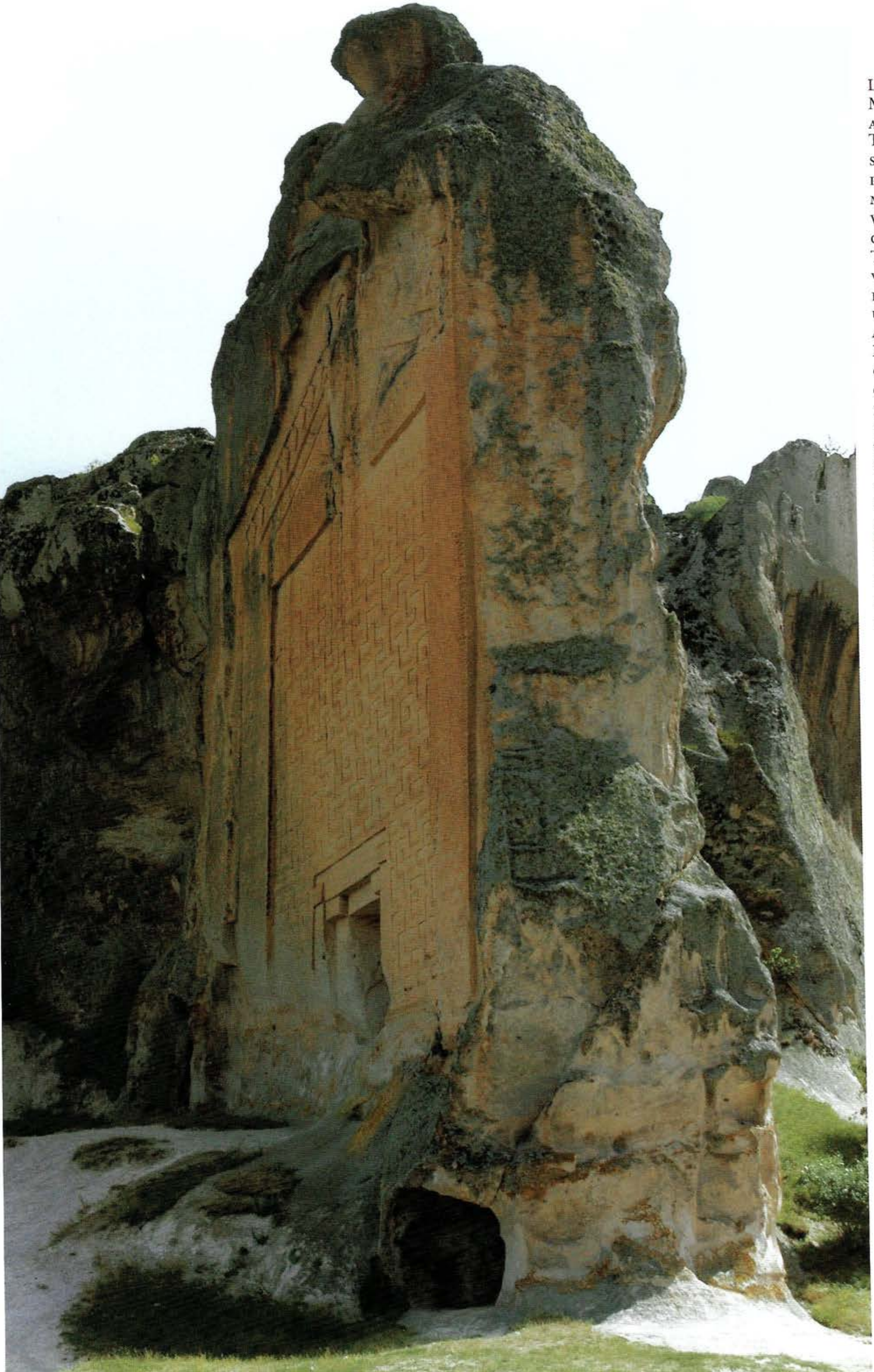
In grander times a palace or mansion hewn from the living rocks looked over the plain to the north. Today it is just bare stone: Phrygian features in one place, an Ottoman fireplace in another. Nearby a small *türbe*, or Islamic tomb, with a large stork's nest on its pinnacle is still maintained. In the east wall there are fine scraps of Byzantine decorated masonry, tracery etched in stone. Who knows what building they came from or why they are there? Perhaps whoever built them into the wall of the *türbe* in medieval times did so to perpetuate the memory of an earlier vanished church.



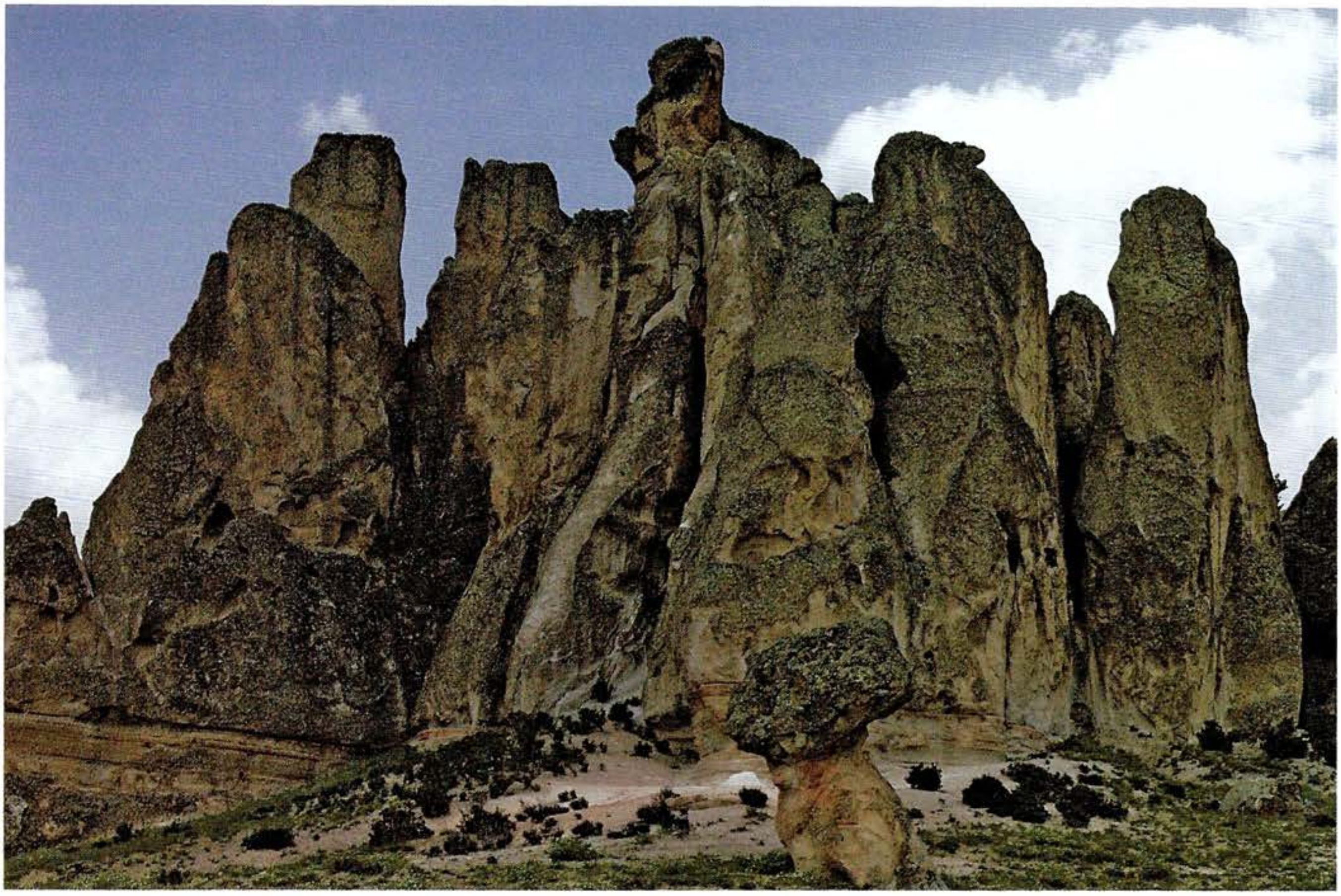
South of Gümbet every single village seems to have something to show: weird rock formations, Phrygian inscriptions, Hittite etchings, and of course Roman tombs. This is still Midas's land and he is not forgotten in it. One day in the 1970s I sat drinking tea in a village home while its inhabitants told me of the king who suffered the curse of turning everything he touched to gold. The next day, in another village a good few kilometres away, we heard the less familiar story of how Midas was given donkey's ears for offending Apollo, though only his barber knew the shameful secret. The man could not contain himself, blurting it out in a field, where the reeds began to whisper: "The King has ass's ears."

You can still catch Phrygian names and words in inscriptions from the Classical period, but by then the culture was fading. During their few centuries of ascendancy, the Phrygians delighted in creating rock monuments of their own, with inscriptions running round the edges in their own rune-like alphabet. Though some of these have been smashed by vandals in recent years, the most majestic still rise over Midas City. No prizes for reading the first word, "Baba", but after that it is anyone's guess. Phrygian is a lost language, with too few words surviving for linguists to work on.

The ancient name of Midas City, or Yazılıkaya today, was probably Metropolis. It may have been a religious centre, rather than a regular



LEFT: THE GRAND MIDAS MONUMENT AT MIDAS CITY. THERE ARE MANY SUCH REMARKABLE PEDIMENTED MONUMENTS IN VARIOUS STATES OF COMPLETION. THE PHRYGIANS WORKED THEIR WAY DOWN USING THE UNCARVED ROCK AS A PLATFORM. MANY HAVE FINE GEOMETRIC CARVINGS, AS WELL DECORATIVE LOTUSES AND WATERLILIES. OPPOSITE, ABOVE: THE ALTAR IN MIDAS CITY KNOWN AS MIDAS'S THRONE. OPPOSITE, BELOW: SCORES OF STEPS LEAD DOWN INTO THE SETTLEMENT'S GIGANTIC CISTERNS



Above: Phrygia is full of clusters of rocks such as these, many rivalling Cappadocia for their strange beauty. Opposite: rock tombs at Midas City

city, and might also be the place where in 404 BC, under Persian rule, the maverick Athenian general Alcibiades was assassinated. Yazılıkaya stands above the plain. Almost everything you see there today is from the days of Midas and the Phrygian kings – great monuments whose purpose we can only guess at, rock-hewn roads with chariot ruts, gigantic cisterns reached by descending scores of steps – and around them the emerald green of lush grass.

We drove past a Roman graveyard in the hills, unmarked on any map. At Ayazin, we reached Byzantium in a valley of Dark Age carvings, including a soot-blackened rock church and a little "cross-in-square" of the kind normally associated with Göreme in Cappadocia. In the eighth century Phrygia was the birthplace of iconoclasm, one of the most baleful Byzantine heresies. The Bishop of Nacolea was one of its leading proponents. Perhaps this landscape of small, isolated, highland valleys bred fanatics out of doughty priests and bishops who had grown up hemmed in from the rest of the world.

Out of these valleys in earlier ages had come unhappy emigrants. The less reputable side of Phrygian life in Roman times was a propensity to sell off the children of its poor into slavery; "Phryx" was a common slave-name in Rome.

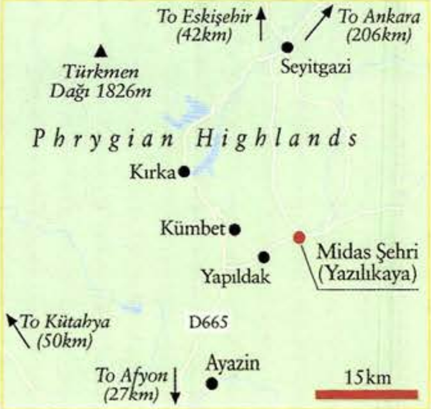
There are no tours to Phrygia. If you go, you must take your own car and plan your own journey, bring your own picnic food, and either sleep in a village house or retire to Eskişehir or Afyon, for there are, thank goodness, no hotels. There are also no guidebooks, except one epic academic work, *The Highlands of Phrygia,* by CH Emilie Haspels. Every village has its secret from the past, but not everyone will know how to unlock it. For those who do go, the roadside stones still speak to the traveller. Unlike Shelley's Ozymandias, they are not saying, "Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair", but as in George Seferis's poem *The King of Asine,* enabling us to make a nostalgic connection with Midas and his age, "sometimes touching with our fingers his touch upon the stones".

◆

Travel notes

For a good, short online guide to Phrygia, see www.frigvadisi.org. The Phrygian Highlands make a long day out from Ankara or a day's break on the drive from Istanbul to the Med. Kütahya is fine for a pause – eat grilled sausage at **Sucukçu Asım**, see Kossuth's pretty house and buy fine Iznik repro pots from **Ismail Yiğit** (ismailyigit.com.tr) – but not for a stay. Make Afyonkarahisar (Afyon) your base. Its hotels are large and brash but all have thermal spas: choose from the **Oruçoğlu, Ikbal** or new **Anemon.** The original **Ikbal** is a lovely *lokanta* on Millet Cad: try its *kaymaklı vişne tiridi* (bread soaked in sour cherries with buffalo cream). A picnic is a must for the highlands: Afyon's spicy *sucuk* and *kaymaklı lokum* (cream-filled Turkish delight) will keep you going. For links, see cornucopia.net/phrygia

SUSANNA HICKLING



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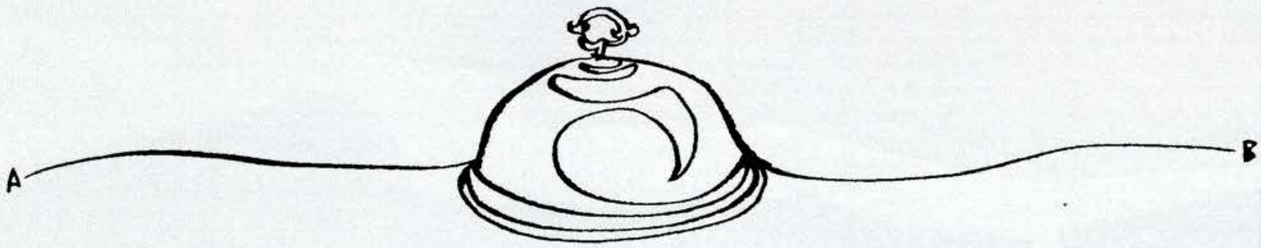

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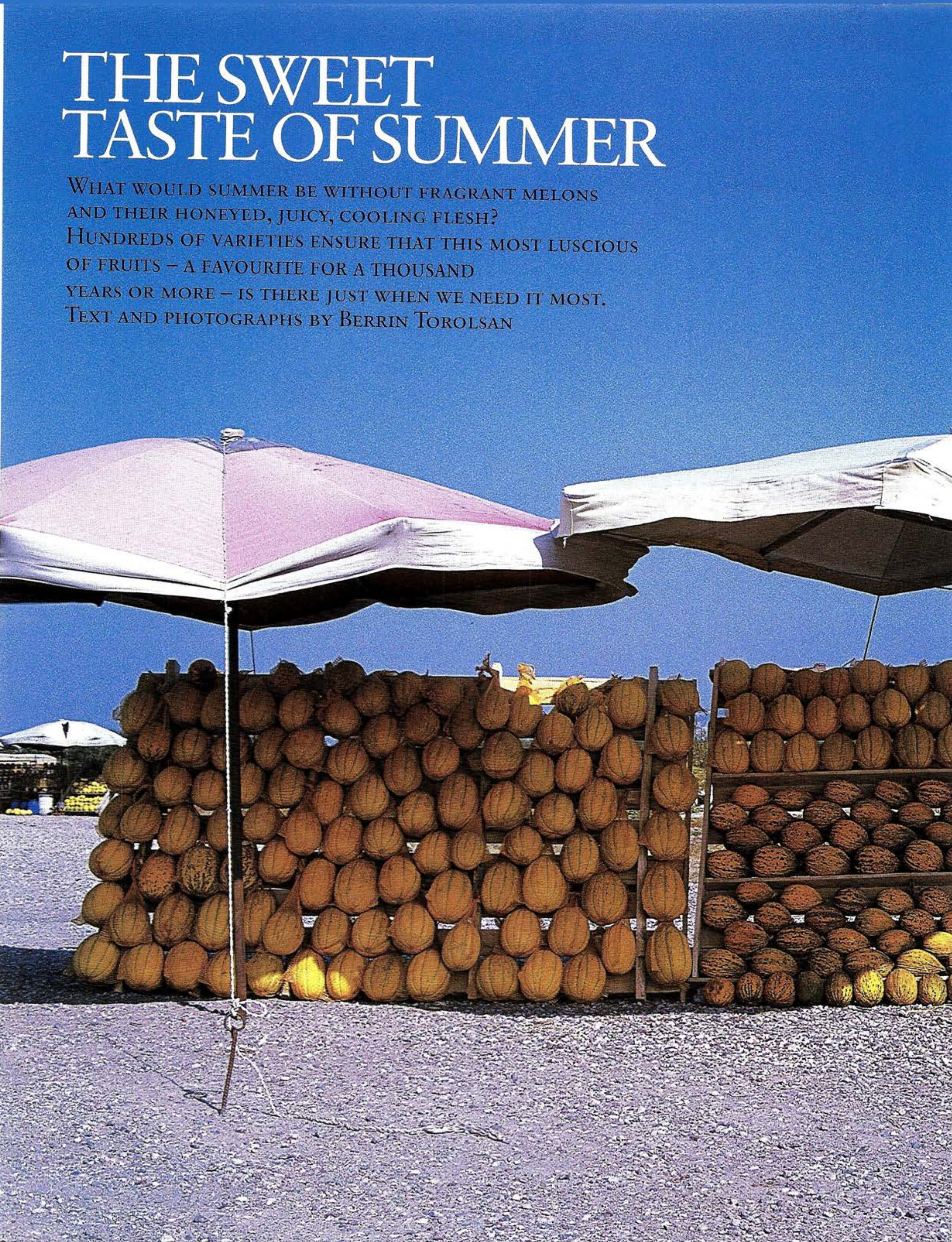
THE SWEET TASTE OF SUMMER

WHAT WOULD SUMMER BE WITHOUT FRAGRANT MELONS AND THEIR HONEYED, JUICY, COOLING FLESH? HUNDREDS OF VARIETIES ENSURE THAT THIS MOST LUSCIOUS OF FRUITS – A FAVOURITE FOR A THOUSAND YEARS OR MORE – IS THERE JUST WHEN WE NEED IT MOST.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY BERRIN TOROLSAN



Previous pages: umbrellas shade melon stalls on a breezy summer's day near the Aegean town of Kirkağaç, where the best 'winter melons' grow. This page: with their thick rind, the canary-yellow descendents of the original casabas will stay juicy all winter if they are properly hung

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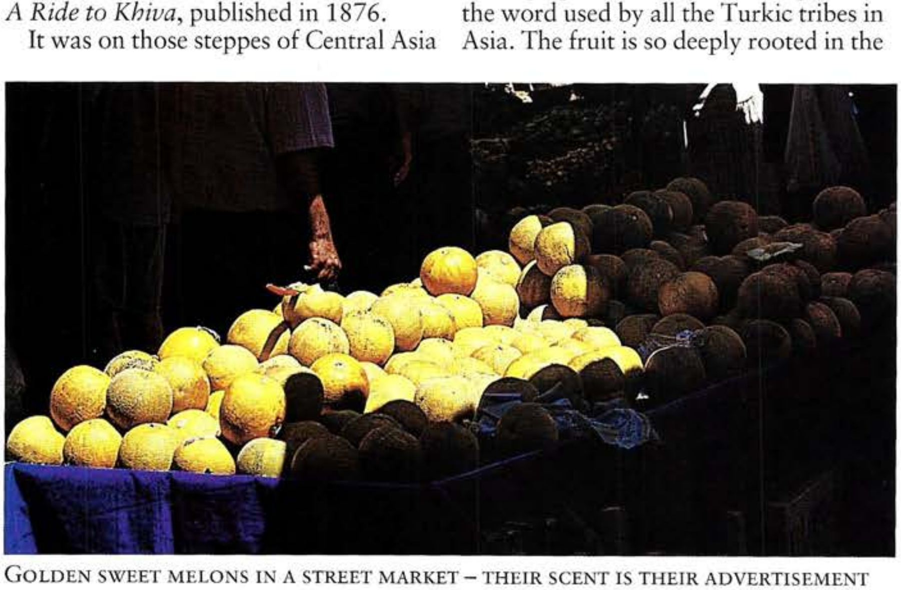
WINTER MELONS OF EVERY HUE, FRECKLED, RIBBED AND PLAIN. IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS PAINTERLY PILE IS AN ALMOST BLACK CASABA

"The taste was so delicious that anyone only accustomed to this fruit in Europe would scarcely recognise its relationship with the delicate and highly perfumed melons of Khiva," wrote the fearless cavalry officer and explorer Colonel Fred Burnaby in *A Ride to Khiva*, published in 1876.

It was on those steppes of Central Asia that the cultivation of sweet melons first took off, and to this day hundreds of different varieties can be found there. The sweet melon, *Cucumis melo*, is known in Turkish as *kavun*, derived from the old Turkish *kagun*, which according to the eleventh-century lexicographer Mahmut of Kashgar, was the word used by all the Turkic tribes in Asia. The fruit is so deeply rooted in the culture that a thousand years ago there were specific words for melon gardens, the possession of melons, even for having a thirst for melons – *kagunsamak*.



GOLDEN SWEET MELONS IN A STREET MARKET – THEIR SCENT IS THEIR ADVERTISEMENT

In 1377 the Andalusian traveller and explorer Ibn Batuta gave an account of the melons of Kharizm in Central Asia: "The surprising thing about these melons is the way the people have of slicing and drying them in the sun and then packing them in baskets, just as Málaga figs are treated in our part of the world." And there is no dried fruit more delicious than these strips of melon, he added. Nineteen years later, the Spanish ambassador to the court of Tamerlane, Ruy Gonzáles de Clavijo, also mentions the large, succulent melons of Bukhara, reporting that a kind known as the Mir-i Timurî is the best in the area.

In the mid-1920s, the Russian botanist Professor Pyotr Zhukovsky came to Turkey to collect vegetable and grain samples for an enormous project: a gene bank that would enable Russia to feed the masses left starving by the revolution. Zhukovsky, a pioneer in the study of the origins of cultivated plants, discovered numerous new species in the course of his extensive expeditions to Anatolia; the book he published in 1933 on his return home, *Agricultural Anatolia*, gave weight to his conviction that many European agricultural cultivars had their origins in Anatolia.

He was particularly surprised to discover two melon varieties – the "diamonds of Anatolia", as he called them – that had become geographically isolated. One is the Van melon, from eastern Anatolia, the ancestor of all modern cantaloupe varieties; the other, from western Anatolia (though now grown all over the world), is the thick-skinned and long-lasting casaba.

The small fragrant melons from Van come in varying shades – cream, orange or celadon green. Their rind is both segmented and "netted", their texture firm and delicious. They are still grown in eastern Anatolia, in the fields around Lake Van and Diyarbakır. Cultivars also appear in early June in the vicinity of Soma and Kırkağaç on the Aegean.

All the cantaloupe melons one finds today seem to have originated with this Anatolian ancestor, the Van melon. The seeds must have reached the Latin world as early as the Middle Ages. It is often said that they were first propagated on papal estates and from there introduced to the rest of Europe and to America. But one contributor to an online food encyclopedia dismisses this notion: "It is a myth that cantaloupe melons have anything to do with the Pope, no matter how food writers toss this out as a 'fact'." Quite so. There are several places named Cantalupo in Italy and Canteloup in France – none particularly renowned for its melons.

On the other hand, we do know that some Popes were fond of melons. One, Paul II, died from overeating iced melons in the Vatican in 1471. And Innocent XIII, who was Pope in the 1720s, enjoyed sipping port from a deseeded melon.

Zhukovsky's second "diamond", the casaba, has a rough dark green rind. It may not be as fragrant, but its delectable, sugary, ivory or lemon-yellow flesh is unrivalled. Casaba melons and their hybrids ripen late in summer and are classified as "winter" melons. They travel well and keep for a long time – all winter long if necessary – if they are properly hung in a cool, airy larder or cellar in the traditional manner. In time they also develop a pleasant aroma. They are cultivated all over the country, but the best are grown in the west, in *bostans*, or vegetable gardens, north of Izmir. In 1844, Charles White, the author of *Three Years in Constantinople* and later a correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph*, wrote: "Among the most renowned… are the kassoobah, from the valley of the name near Smyrna."

In Turkish, the word casaba, or *kasaba*, simply means town. The question is, which town? It turns out that a market town near Manisa, north of Izmir, today's Turgutlu, was known as Kasaba in Ottoman times. Located on the fertile, silted plains of the Gediz river, this must surely be the source.

Today the town of Kırkağaç, a few miles further north, is a Mecca for melons. The rounded Hasanbey variety, with its thick, knobbly, deep green and citrine rind and its buttery flesh oozing sweetness, is regarded as one of the finest casaba melons in the world. Other excellent varieties grown here include the elongated Altınbaş, with its thick, golden rind and dark blue freckles, and the equally freckled, roundish Kırkağaç melon itself.

Istanbul also has its melons. Charles White recounts how one day, strolling with a friend through the valley of Çubuklu on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus, he bought "ten sweet melons from an Arnoot [Albanian] gardener for six piastres, about one shilling".

The pale yellow Topatan variety, from the Sea of Marmara, takes its name from its torpedo shape. The fruit's delicate skin is reticulated with a fine, whitish net, which makes it look frosted from a distance. It used to be cultivated outside Istanbul in Kumburgaz and Silivri, on the Thracian shore of the Sea of Marmara; ripening in early June, it is sought after for its perfume – one is enough to fill the entire house, though the delicate white flesh is just not sweet enough these days. Having said that, I have childhood memories of my parents complaining that Topatan were less tasty than in the old days.

By comparison with early melons, "winter" melons, which have good keeping qualities, lack fragrance but are often the most syrupy and succulent. The fertile valleys of Manisa, Balıkesir, Akhisar and Izmir on the Aegean are ideal for them, as are the sandy banks of the Meriç river in Thrace. Tons of winter melons are harvested yearly. Ripening late, they make their appearance in August and September, often displayed hanging on roadside stalls, to be preserved for enjoyment through the winter.

Colourful mountains of melons are a common sight at weekly street markets. "Sherbet, sherbet!" shout the vendors to advertise their goods, offering thin slices to prove just how sweet they are. Connoisseurs examine them, sniff them, weigh them in their hands. The stalk should have dried slightly, the bottom yield gently if pressed and the fruit should feel heavy and full.

Served chilled, melons are consumed widely in summer and autumn as a thirst-quenching dessert or as a meze to accompany rakı, with a good white

THE HIGHWAY AT KIRKAĞAÇ, LINED WITH STALLS EXHIBITING A BUMPER HARVEST cheese. Sprinkling melons with sugar, let alone salt, is unheard of today. So is cooking with them. Yet Mehmet Kâmil Efendi's book of 1844, *Melceü't-Tabbâhîn (The Refuge of Chefs)*, has three exotic melon recipes: a savoury dish of whole stuffed melon; mixed pickled vegetables, including baby cucumbers and gourds, and tiny unripe melons and watermelons; and a dessert of baklava with puréed-melon topping.

Twenty years or so later, the writer Ali Eşref Dede, a Sufi, took up the same recipes in his treatise on food, adding comments and amendments. He begins his chapter on dolma dishes with Mehmet Kâmil's recipe for stuffed melon, but using small unripe melons (*kelek* in Turkish). He also gives two versions of melon baklava, one with a honey-based syrup.

Even if we no longer cook with them, a summer without melons is unthinkable. Besides being an excellent source of vitamins (B1, B2 and C) and antioxidants, along with its cousin the watermelon, it is certainly the finest fruit with which to end a summer meal.

MEHMET KÂMIL EFENDI'S KAVUN DOLMASI
BAKED MELON STUFFED WITH NUTS AND LAMB

1 medium melon (any variety)
Filling:
1 tablespoon butter or olive oil
A handful of almonds (skinned)
1 tablespoon pine kernels
1 medium onion (finely chopped)
250 g minced meat (lamb)
1 small cup rice (rinsed)
Salt and pepper

This exotic nineteenth-century dish, teaming sweet and savoury flavours, is well worth trying. The recipe is based on one found in Mehmet Kâmil's *The Refuge of Chefs*. It requires a sweet, ripe melon. The author doesn't specify the variety but I suspect any will do. He concludes by saying: "This dish can also be prepared with a pumpkin, which will taste different of course, but is no less delicious."

1 Wash the melon, slice a lid off the stalk end and set aside. Using a spoon, scoop out and discard the seeds.

2 To prepare the filling, heat the butter or oil in a frying pan, fry the almonds and pine kernels until they turn golden, add the onions, and finally the meat, and stir-fry a little longer.

3 Stir the rice into the mixture, season with salt and pepper, and spoon the filling into the melon. Replace the lid, securing it with wooden toothpicks.

4 Bake the stuffed melon, covered, in a moderate oven for about 30 minutes.

5 When serving, halve lengthways, then cut into boat-shaped wedges, spooning over the syrupy cooking juices.

ALI EŞREF DEDE'S KAVUN DOLMASI
BAKED SMALL MELONS WITH SPICY LAMB FILLING

Small unripe melons of equal size (one per person)
Filling (for 4 or 5 melons):
1 tablespoon butter or olive oil
A handful of almonds (skinned)
A handful of pistachios (skinned)
2 medium onions (finely chopped)
250g minced lamb
1 small cup rice (rinsed)
Salt, pepper and powdered cinnamon
Fresh coriander (finely chopped)

When summer ends and the melons stop ripening it is time to collect *kelek* – the unripe ones. This is the Sufi cook Ali Eşref Dede's version of Mehmet Kâmil's 1844 recipe. He doesn't say so, but I suggest scooping out some of the flesh to allow room for the filling, and adding some water to the casserole when cooking.

1 Wash the melons, slice a lid off each of the stalk ends and discard the seeds. Scoop out enough flesh to leave a wall the thickness of a finger. Reserve the flesh.

2 To prepare the filling, heat the butter or oil in a frying pan and stir-fry first the nuts, then the onions until soft. Add the meat and keep stirring until it has browned, then stir in the rice. Remove from the heat, add the melon flesh, roughly chopped, and season with salt, pepper and cinnamon.

3 Scatter the coriander over the filling and mix in well.

4 Fill the melons with the meat mixture and replace the lids, securing each one with a toothpick or two.

5 Stand the melons in a deep casserole, add half a glass of water, and bake, covered, in a moderate oven for about 45 minutes, until the rind is soft to touch and all the flavours have mingled. Serve hot with the cooking juices spooned over.

KELEK TURŞUSU
MELON PICKLE

4 or 5 very small unripe melons
4 glasses water
1/2 tablespoon granulated sugar
One heaped tablespoon salt
1/2 glass wine vinegar

Unripe melons as small as oranges are sold specifically for pickling. This pickle, rich in vitamins B, C and D, is a speciality of imperial Bursa. It goes very well with cold meats, roasts and pilav.

1 Rinse the melons and prick several times with a wooden toothpick.

2 Pack the whole melons tightly in the bottom of a jar.

3 Boil the water briefly with sugar and salt, until they dissolve. Add the vinegar and pour the hot liquid into the jar to cover. Place a weight inside the jar on top of the melons and stand the jar in a cool place for the pickle to mature.

KAVUN DONDURMASI
MELON SORBET

Melon (preferably of a perfumed variety)
Sugar

Ev Kadını (The Housewife), written in 1882 by Fahriye Hanım, a lady from Istanbul, gives two recipes for melons: one for ice cream, the other for sorbet. Fragrant, less sweet melons such as the highly perfumed Topatan are good for this sorbet, but cantaloupe, muskmelon or any other scented variety will do. When serving, I would add a single mint leaf to each bowl for extra freshness.

1 Discard the seeds, scrape the flesh into a bowl, add two spoonfuls or more of sugar, and mash it with a fork.

2 Freeze the melon purée.

3 Stir before serving and spoon into individual bowls.

◆

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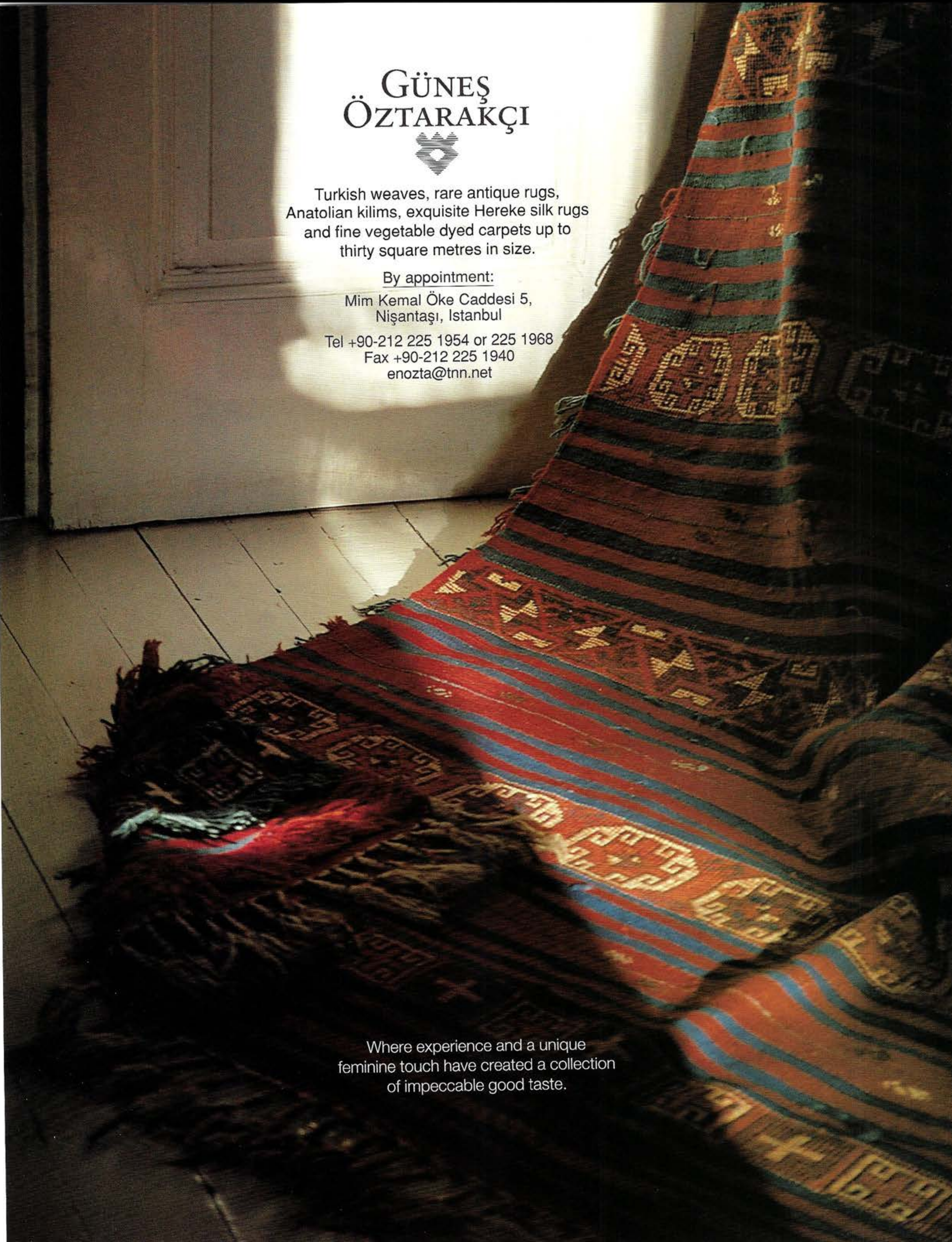

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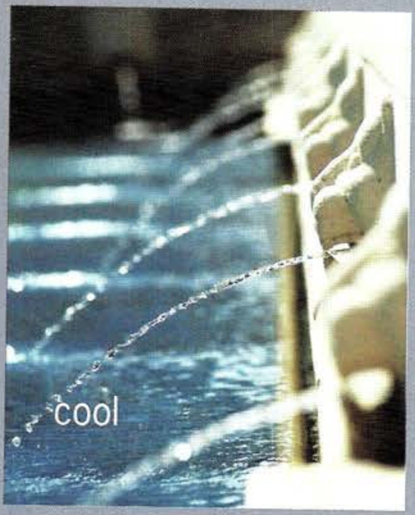

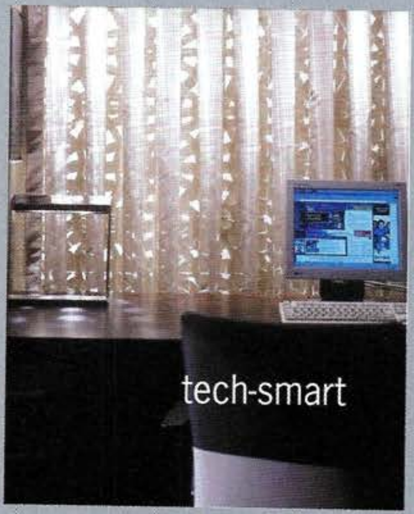

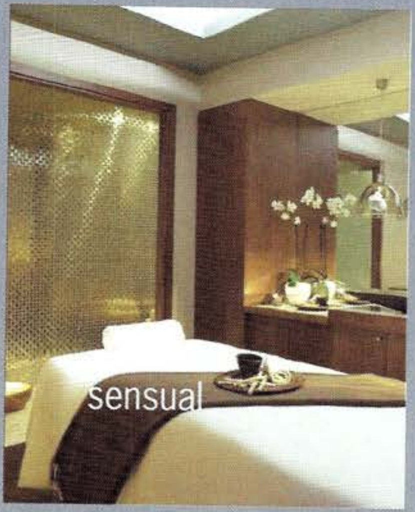

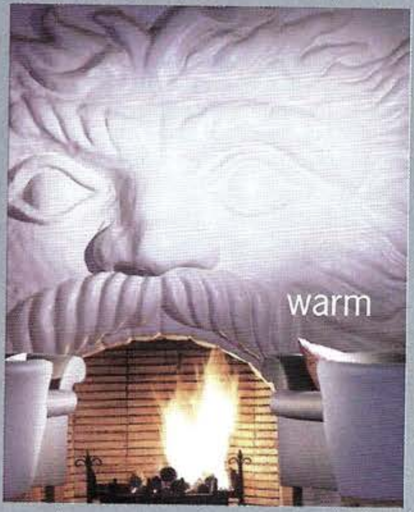

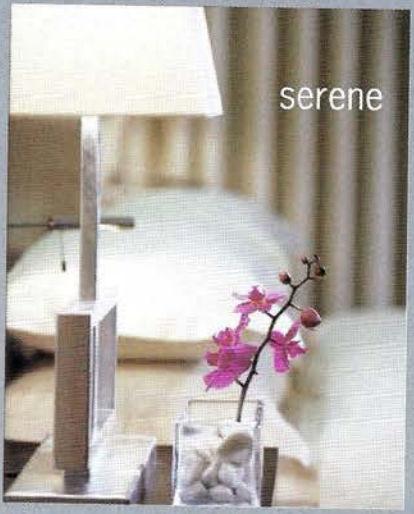

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VILLAGE VOICES

In the latest instalment of her Iznik Diary, Azize Ethem returns home with tales of her Damascene experience, welcomes a bumper crop of spring flowers and has her doubts about Iznik's red-light district

All aboard the Toros Express

I am just back from a trip to Syria. Four of us travelled from Hydarpaşa railway station to Aleppo on the Toros Express. Arriving for our 9am departure, we walked past more than twenty Turkish carriages with comfortable recliner seats, as well as several smart dining-cars and sleepers. Eventually our porter stopped at a scruffy Syrian Railways carriage and started to hand up our luggage to a Syrian guard sporting a smart uniform and slippers.

Our cabins were comfortable, with a sliding door that turned them into a single living area during the day. We soon learned to sit down very gently or risk being swallowed as the seat transformed itself into a bunk. We had overdone the provisions and between the four of us we had enough food for the entire carriage, but as our carriage was locked at each end there was to be no mingling with the locals.

Although I have been to Syria several times, it has always been to visit Selim's family and there has never been time to do the touristy bit. The Syrian people are always quietly welcoming and the cities have not suffered from the proliferation of those nasty modern commercial buildings one so often sees in other Eastern countries. As a train enthusiast, this was a chance to see the Turkish and Syrian countryside away from the roads. Unfortunately it rained from Hydarpaşa to Aleppo, so no gazing at remote villages from the comfort of my seat.

All the carriage occupants had become friends by the time we reached a small village somewhere near Gaziantep the next day. Here the train stopped, and when the guard announced we would not be moving for an hour or two, we set off en masse to explore. The misty rain turned to a lashing downpour. Wet and very cold, we soon tired of the village *çayhane* and returned to our carriage, which, bereft of the Turkish carriages, stood, minus an engine, alone on the tracks. After a three-hour wait, a Syrian engine eventually arrived and we chugged off for an hour before stopping again, this time at the Turkish border.

Our passports were all processed quickly and, back on the train, we readied ourselves for the Syrian passport control. The train didn't move; the guard just shrugged his shoulders and we waited. After twenty minutes an argument erupted on the platform, with officials shouting at a newly arrived uniformed man, while two policemen stood watching from a distance. After thirty-odd hours on a train, this was a riveting development, and everybody lined the corridor to watch. Tayfun, my neighbour, Iznikwise and cabinwise, got off the train and asked the policemen what was happening.

The newcomer was the customs inspector, ready to search our carriage. The police had explained he was always late arriving and always held the train up for a further half hour. The passport team had had enough of him and had chosen that day to bring him down a peg. It was as if we had stepped into a Charlie Chaplin movie – which continued to play as the stationmaster waved us on and we departed for the Syrian side.

The Syrian passport stop offered no excitement and by evening we were safely ensconced in our Aleppo hotel. The receptionist suggested we eat at the Al Kommeh restaurant, where the food was the best Middle Eastern fare I have ever tasted, with plate after plate arriving: humus, babaganoush, meatballs flavoured with fresh mint, lamb cooked with sour cherries, *tabouleh*, *kibbeh*, *fattoush*, assorted salads and fresh unleavened bread, washed down with glass after glass of freshly squeezed fruit juice. The bill came to 6,000 Syrian Pounds, which translates to £1.50 sterling a head.

Next day, Pascal, our French friend, coiffeur to the rich and famous, turned out to be a guide *par excellence*. Armed with his guidebook, he led the way, occasionally stopping to give a lecture to the three of us trailing behind. Aleppo is one of mankind's oldest continuously inhabited cities, rich in history and historical monuments. We explored the ancient walls, the *souqs* and the citadel, and spent hours wandering the narrow back streets, some of them no more than five foot wide. In some of these ancient lanes the second floor of the houses jutted out above the street, so that neighbours living opposite each other could shake hands across the street from their windows. Each evening, tired and footsore, we would head to the Al Kommeh to feast, before tottering back to the hotel to fall into bed.

We travelled to Damascus by bus and, after settling into our hotel near the old Hajaz railway station, we set off to explore the museum. I am not a museum person, but this time I was fascinated. Having mislaid my friends, I was wandering in the west wing when I came across an amazing exhibit. In a small, glazed frame on the wall was a tiny tablet measuring no more than two inches by half an inch. A card explained that this was the most important exhibit in the museum and was the oldest example in the world of a complete alphabet: the thirty-one letters of the Ugaritic Alphabet, circa 1500BC. There was no huge arrow or placard, and if I had blinked I would have missed it.

Once more we explored the back streets and old markets. We visited the Jami al Sinaniya, built in 1590 for the Ottoman governor Sinan Pasha. It was rather shabby and neglected, but one of the groundsmen told us that the Turkish government had recently come to an agreement with the Syrian authorities for a Turkish team to restore this historic mosque.

At the Umayyad Mosque my friend Beatrice, our Parisian fashionista, was deemed inappropriately dressed and was whisked away to be shrouded in a sort of monk's habit before being allowed to enter. Also known as the Great Mosque of Damascus, this is the first monumental work of architecture in Islamic history. Built on the site of progressive sacred buildings – from an Aramaic temple to a Roman temple to Jupiter – before becoming a church, it was rebuilt as it stands today under the auspices of the Umayyad Caliphate between 709 and 715. The problem with places like this is that there is no way I can take it all in. I sat at the edge of the marble courtyard totally overwhelmed by the beauty of the building.

Next stop was Palmyra, the famed city of Queen Zenobia. Since reading the story of Jane Digby, I have always wanted to see these ruins. Britain seemed to produce an intrepid group of women in the mid-nineteenth century. Sitting on a comfortable bus as we covered mile after mile of desert, I imagined how different a journey it must have been for Jane Digby, Lady Anne Blunt and Isabel Burton. Arriving late in the afternoon, we were able to explore the ruins and watch the sunset over the desert. Nothing but desert, as far as the eye could see, and these amazing remnants of an ancient city.

The next morning we once again wandered the site before heading back to the terminus to catch a bus to Homs, in the northwest, close to the Lebanese border. Arriving after nightfall, we took a taxi for the one-hour drive to the Krak des Chevaliers. Selim had visited this castle – reputedly the most notable of all Crusader castles – as a child and still talks of its enormous size.

We stayed in a more expensive hotel than usual and couldn't really see anything to validate the price hike. But we changed our tune in the morning when Beatrice pulled back the bedroom curtain and there on the hill in front of us was this huge castle with its colossal walls.

Built by the Knights Hospitaller in the early twelfth century, it was designed to withstand a five-year siege. Obviously the builders knew what they were doing, for it withstood numerous onslaughts. Perched above the Orontes Valley, the Crusaders controlled all movement and trade between the Holy Land and Anatolia for 130 years, until their power came to an end in 1271, when the castle was conquered by the Egyptian Mamluk Sultan Baybars I.

We spent hours at the castle, wandering its tunnels, passages, massive chambers, as well as some of the thirteen towers and numerous chapels. Pascal quoted his guidebook and informed us that the castle covers 30,000 square metres. It was a bit like exploring a small town.

That afternoon it was taxi then bus back to our starting point of Aleppo, with a feast that evening at the Al Kommeh. Next morning it was an early breakfast, then downstairs to the taxi taking us across the border to Gaziantep and our flight back to Istanbul. A wonderful holiday with good friends. Perhaps next year we will explore the Turkish side of the border.

Spring in the air

Back home in Iznik, it is time to plant the seeds in the propagation house – and to knuckle down to some serious spring-cleaning. I have an impressive list of chores, and if even half of them get done it will be more than impressive.

I don't remember the name of the old musical with the song *Spring Is Busting Out All Over*, but the refrain keeps ringing in my head. Whether it is the sunshine or rain at the right time, I don't know, but I would swear this year's spring flowers are bigger and brighter, and the quince orchard is white with flowers.

Obviously I am not the only one with spring fever. The fishermen pass our gate each morning with cans of paint and caulking paste. The boats are all upturned as they are readied for summer fishing. Mesut, the paint-shop owner, who says everyone is revamping their homes, has the colour charts permanently spread out across the counter.

Tractors with families perched on the trailers can be seen at all hours of the day, travelling out to their olive groves. The air is filled with the sweet smell of the fires burning the pruned twigs. The mayor has a team of men cleaning the road verges and footpaths, as well as a group of women tidying the foreshore. Teahouses and restaurants closed and neglected in the winter are all buzzing with activity. With the snows melting in the distant mountains, it is time I donned my waders and cleared the little brook of weeds. Then it is off to Mesut's to choose paint for the drawing room.

Restoration dramas

The restaurant with the bordello décor has changed hands but doesn't seem to have a rush of customers. A hundred yards down the road, the Sultan Murat II Turkish bath restoration is complete, and once the too-pristine stonework weathers a bit it will look impressive in daylight. Unfortunately, at night it is lit by scores of tiny red lights. We did suggest to the *Kaymakam* that soft white lighting would be better, but he told us that red was the traditional colour for illuminating historic buildings. I hope tourists driving into Iznik at night don't get the wrong idea about our town when they clap eyes on the only traditionally lit historicbuilding I have ever seen.

With the hamam finished, a team has started renovating Ayasofya. In 787 this church was the site of the Seventh Ecumenical Council and the Second Council of Nicaea. It was here that important ecclesiastical decisions were made which are still part of Christian doctrine today. For these reasons I always wondered why some church organisation or international conservation group had not seen fit to restore it. The building was partially destroyed and set on fire by retreating occupying armies in the Turkish War of Independence. Since then it has stood roofless as the weather slowly eroded its remaining walls. Now at last, with a grant from the government, work has started – a new roof being the foremost priority. ◆

Beyond the Orchard, a book of Azize Ethem's stories, published by Çitlembik –Nettleberry, is offered to CORNUCOPIA subscribers post-free at £6.50

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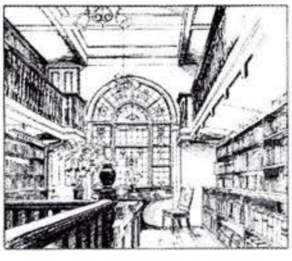

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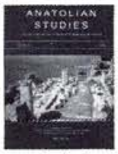

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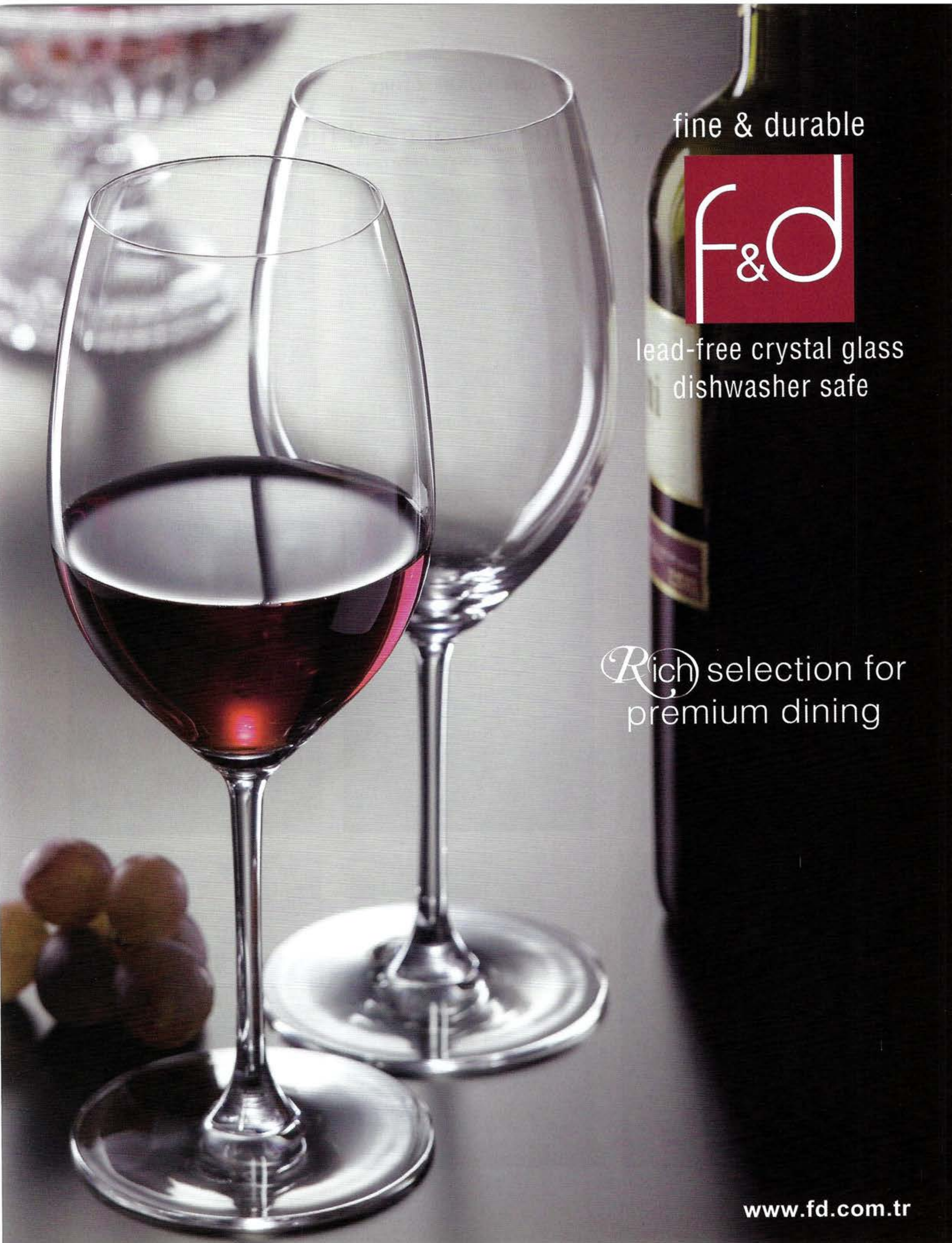
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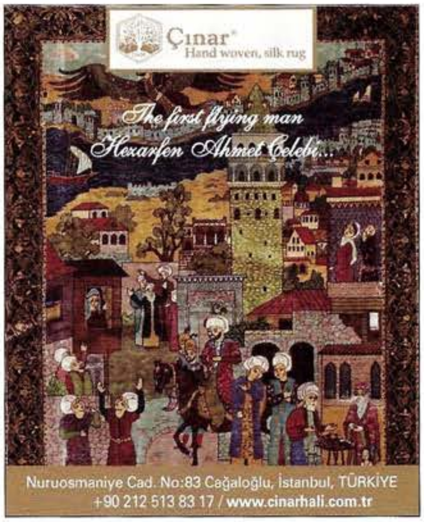

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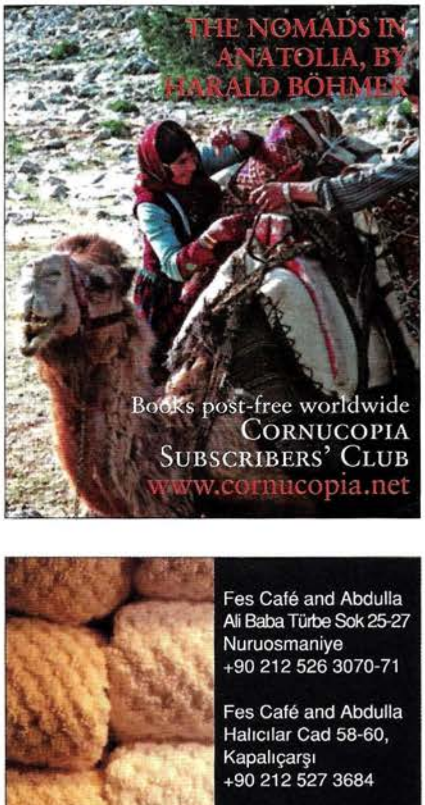

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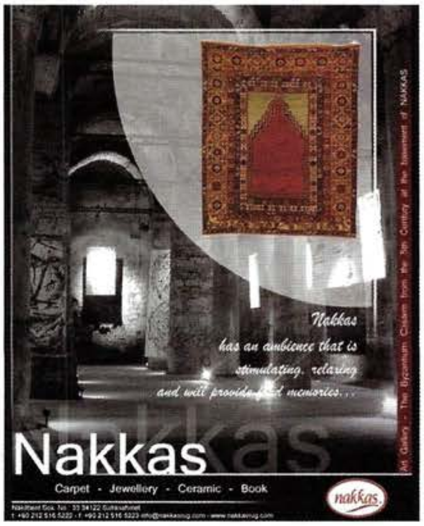
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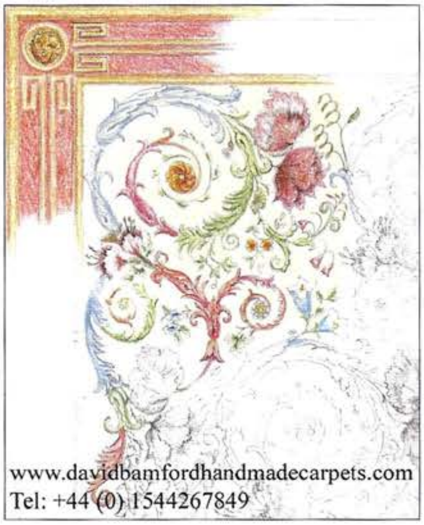

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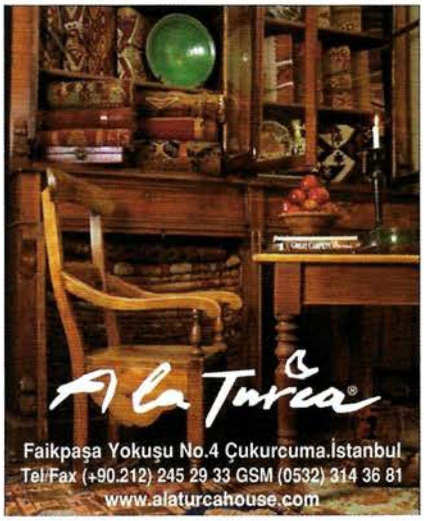

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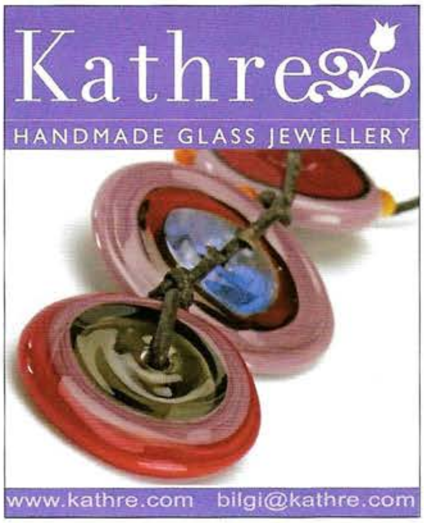

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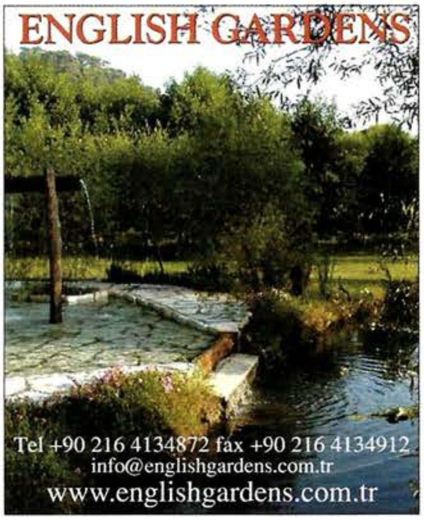

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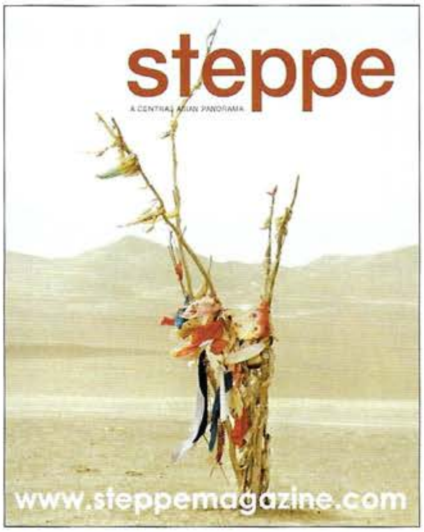

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ANDREW FINKEL FINDS REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL IN NEWLY FASHIONABLE ALANYA, REVISITS TWO OLD ISTANBUL FAVOURITES AND PUTS ON THE RITZ LIKE NEVER BEFORE

Lingering a little longer in Alanya

The prosperity of the Mediterranean city of Alanya is literally built on sand. Two long beaches either side of a Gibraltar-like spit of rock lure nearly a tenth of all Turkey's tourists. In an age before package tours it was a small town at the foot of a Seljuk fortress, surrounded by citrus and banana groves. Alanyans felt closer to Cairo or Beirut, to which they could reach out by sea, than to the Turkish mainland on the other side of impassable mountains. Now they feel closer to Hamburg or Dublin, which feed a constant stream of tourists to Antalya airport, two hours away. Hotel beds nearly outnumber the resident population and housing estates for sun-starved northern Europeans proliferate like rabbits on the eastbound highway out of town.

Today's average visitor, one hotelier informed me, eats a late breakfast, makes a picnic lunch with stuff from the breakfast table, sunbathes, naps, swims, eats dinner at the hotel buffet, shops, then goes clubbing (they still call them "discos" here), then stumbles into bed to start all over again.

Alanya is the former Coracesium, where Pompey fought the pirates, but it's a bit like Brigadoon. The hotels are only awake four months of the year, then the visitors leave, the doors close, and the town goes back to sleep. It is not a cycle to inspire great food. There are plenty of restaurants touting for tourists, but you might be forgiven for thinking you're more likely to end up with a melanoma than a decent meal.

Yet there is still a fair amount – particularly within the castle keep – to attract the independent traveller. The most impressive monuments date from the twenty years after 1221, when the Seljuk ruler Alâeddin Keykûbad turned the backwater into a royal wintering place between campaigns. His fortifications dominate the town, but scattered about is archaeological evidence of the medieval leisure industry he created. The settlement was littered with hunting grounds, pleasure gardens, fruit orchards and almond groves. The Seljuks dined on roast venison and Persian rice before the Mongols arrived to spoil the feast.

Just as Alanya has changed out of all recognition in the past few decades, its city elders are hoping it will change again – from being just another Costa del Concrete into a real city, albeit one blessed with surf and clean beaches. It's still not quite there, but the presence of a few decent restaurants in which you would actually enjoy lingering over a meal – and which stay open off season – is helping to give a more cosmopolitan feel.

Kaptan's Güverte, the deck in front of the Kaptan Hotel, is where "old" Alanya goes on its nights out. It is a platform overlooking the harbour in summer, covered with a tent-like structure when the weather gets cool. I have been in both seasons and still remember the taste of a globe artichoke, braised and served warm, its choke replaced with a dolma stuffing. It was something I'd never tried before but which I would happily eat every day.

The menu is large, with meat, fish and some vegetarian dishes. Portions are large, too, and the sauces creamy. There's a choice of a European menu (starter, main course, pud) or Turkish meze to start. These are familiar but with a Mediterranean tang.

Anyone visiting Alanya has to sample the region's prized legume, *ülübü,* or buck-eyed pea. In season it comes as a dressed green, but more often as a cold bean salad. Our host surprised us with a sticky toffee pudding. Nemesis, goddess of just desserts and once a popular deity on this Pamphylian plain, it is still in vogue it seems.

Meneviş is another upscale restaurant – cheerful, sensibly lit, with a raised fireplace and the feel of a good provincial restaurant in France. It is about as formal as a resort city can be and, unlike at most of the other restaurants in town, you know the clientele are regulars. Starters included a careful range of cold meze, a decent fish chowder, and a perfectly grilled fresh jumbo prawn – but sadly only one. The real treat was the Alanyan speciality, fish *tarator*. *Tarator* is the generic name for a rich sauce – in Bulgaria made with cucumbers; in the Middle East with sesame oil *(tahin)*. Alanya's is a paste of ground walnuts, garlic and lemon, thickened with olive oil and old-style ship's biscuit or hard tack. It tastes better than it sounds, especially served by the bucket as an accompaniment to *girida*, the prize Mediterranean grouper. We had ours warm, but it is often served cold, even on chicken, as in *vitello tonnato*, though with a bolder, totally addictive, flavour. *Meneviş* is a berry like a wild pistachio, which dried and ground makes a chocolatey sort of coffee. We had some to end the meal.

I also ate *girida* at the **Kaptan's Filika**, the Güverte's sister restaurant. Here the fish was wrapped in swiss chard, with a sweetish creamy sauce of both apple and what Turks call "ground apples", ie Jerusalem artichokes. Filika is a beach-front restaurant, spectacularly situated at the very base of the rocky peninsula. By day there is a view of the deckchairs, and the temptation is to rush into the water yourself. At night the view is of the deep, black sea and Keykûbad's fortress illuminated up above. The menu is large: from pasta to kebab. Hot mezes include grilled squid and a fish *börek* that is more of a crêpe. There was gooey melted sesame *helva* with a squeeze of orange for dessert.

BRIEFLY NOTED: Alanya sports one of Turkey's new micro-breweries, named after the **Red Tower,** the octagonal Seljuk fortress next door. The restaurant complex has a bar at the bottom, a lounge on top, and a summer terrace. The beers are made from German recipes – including a wheat beer and a dark lager, along with pilsner – but the feel of the restaurants is less Teutonic, more American college town. The menu is kebab-pizza-burger-pasta comfort food – perfect holiday fare.

Kaptan's Güverte: Iskele Cd 70, Alanya; +90 242 513 4900
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Kaptan's Filika: Güzelyalı Cd, Alanya; +90 242 513 1094

In search of the familiar

Like souls in purgatory, we restaurant critics are. For years I prayed with humble devotion in this column for the advent of a new Turkish cuisine, of chefs prepared to smudge the plate with an emulsion of this, spume of that, like Van Gogh at his height. And I believed with the certainty of perfect faith that the day would come when items on the menu would be described not in a few words but in paragraphs, and when waiters with enough higher degrees to earn themselves the right to be called "servers" would stand before my table and recite with the sincerity of rosy-cheeked catechumens the doctrinal complexity of that night's specials.

The news is that the Jerusalem of highly constructed cuisine is being built on Istanbul's crowded restaurant scene. I, however, am backsliding into apostasy. I had a pleasant surprise in **Park Şamdan** at lunch the other day because the main course, when it arrived, was so much nicer than its description on the menu. It was an aromatic braised rib of veal with just the right amount of meat on the bone, and the meat separated easily onto a mound of properly cooked porcini risotto. Park Şamdan, now in its late twenties, has earned the right to be called an institution. It caters less to foodies on the razzle than to executives grabbing the jugular. The head of one major conglomerate was hosting a party behind me (well, I *hope* he was paying) and the head of the stock exchange was being fêted to my right.

The restaurant relies on the oldest tricks in the book to preserve a club-like atmosphere: you have to ring a bell to get in, and there's a good bar. The waiters hover like concerned aunties to steer you to the low-cholesterol option or recommend the ultimate comfort food – an artichoke braised in olive oil, or other seasonal veg. I defiantly chose salmon tartare to start, but wished I hadn't. It was a tad weepy, with too much Tabasco. I didn't grumble. Park Şamdan feels secure and familiar, and there are moments in life when these are just the right virtues.

With the advent of Zuma (London, Hong Kong and Dubai) and Hakkasan (London and soon Miami, Abu Dhabi, Shanghai), Istanbul has become a stopover for global brands. So spare a thought for the city's indigenous upmarket chain. **Borsa** continues to meet with quiet approval. It serves Turkish food and regional specialities with the right amount of elegant fuss. It is one of the few places you'd feel at ease sipping wine with *döner kebab* or tossing back a grappa after slow-baked lamb on aubergine purée.

There is now a branch in the ever-so-glam Istinye Park mall, but I was more excited at the prospect of supper in the Borsa on the Asian side of the city, housed in the converted summer palace of Adile Sultan. The sister of Sultan Abdülmecid, she is a personal heroine of mine. A proto-feminist, she was also a dedicated philanthropist, a reasonable poet, and someone who tried to move the picket lines of the harem into a modern world. She also had an eye for real estate. Her home in Kandilli stands on a hilltop promontory overlooking the Bosphorus. After her death in 1899 it was converted into a pioneering school for girls, and the revenues from the building still, I believe, support that school's new premises.

Even refurbished, the palace is more institutional than regal in air, and much of the space is reserved for private events. In warm weather diners sit outside and enjoy a rare view of both Bosphorus bridges. I was there on a dark and stormy night, when the restaurant moves into what looks like the brick-lined, high-ceilinged palace kitchen. It's an attractive room with a panorama through the picture windows at one end. The menu is identical to Borsa's across the water and for habitués requires no explanation.

Park Şamdan: Mim Kemal Öke Cd 18,
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Putting on the Ritz

If I had to define what has driven me to imperil my waistline in the service of this column, it has been the desire to recommend or dissuade, and to chart the latest trend. What follows – a description of a dinner I had in someone's kitchen – is offered with no greater ambition than to inspire envy. It started with lamb carpaccio (served with a Crane Lake White Zinfandel, 2005), wound its way through truffled veal fillet (with a Louis Latour Bourgogne Pinot Noir 2002), to the eighth course of a frozen Grand Marnier parfait as tall as the Tower of Babylon, elaborately constructed with spun sugar and a chocolate dome. Better than the goose liver crême brulée, or the goose liver with artichoke and quince chutney, was the goose liver torchon in porte wine jelly – an astonishing contrast of flavours (the Sauternes was a 1995 Le Dauphin Château Guiraud).

The kitchen was in the Ritz-Carlton Istanbul, and we sat on stools at the counter, watching executive chef Marcel Nosari perform. Nosari, a mix of Australian and Swiss German upbringing, has run kitchens in several serious Bangkok hotels, but this meal was fusion-free, except for the roasted lobster served with babaganoush and Mediterranean salsa. One surprise was a yellow capsicum soup. It was served over a slice of scallop topped with caviar and frothed into a fashionable spume, but it is based on a simple, wonderful-tasting, visually stunning potage which you can make (as I did) by picking a pittance-worth of peppers from any market. ◆

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TURKISH ART
TOO GOOD TO BE MISSED

Great developments are taking place in the Istanbul art world, while outside Turkey revisions are being made of established Ottoman collections.

At **Platform Garanti,** on Istiklal Caddesi, an eagerly awaited development will provide much larger galleries, a library and a restaurant. Meanwhile, the residency and programme of talks continue.

Down by the waterside, **Istanbul Modern** has taken the history bull by the horns, co-operating with Deyan Sudjic, director of London's Design Museum, on *Design Cities* (April 23 – August 10), a pioneering exhibition tracing the development of modern design. From the first World's Fair at the Crystal Palace in London in 1851, it goes on to show the innovations of Adolph Loos in Vienna at the turn of the century, Walter Gropius's Bauhaus at Dessau in the 1920s, Le Corbusier in 1930s Paris, Charles Eames in 1940s Los Angeles, and up to the present, focusing on the key centres of contemporary design innovation, Milan, Tokyo and London. The show moves to London in the autumn.

Up the hill in Tepebaşı, the **Pera Museum** follows its excellent exhibition of Josef Koudelka's photographs with a retrospective of paintings by Joan Miró (May 3 – August 31), organised in co-operation with the Maeght Foundation.

Upstream on the Bosphorus, the autumn programme of the **Sakıp Sabancı Museum** offers *Salvador Dalí: a Surrealist in Istanbul* (September 18 – January 19, 2009), with a display of over 270 works from the Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation in Figueras, reflecting all aspects of his multi-faceted work.

Outside Turkey, one of the best-kept Ottoman art secrets is the extensive collection of the **Staatliche Kunstsammlungen** in Dresden. Though Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland (1670–1733), fought against the Sultan, he was an admirer and collector of Ottoman culture. In autumn 2009 these and other works will be shown publicly for the first time in specially designed galleries. Planned to coincide with this is *Ottoman Remix: The Contemporary Art of an Imaginary Empire*, an exhibition selected from the 27 present-day countries that were incorporated within the Ottoman Empire at its height.

DAVID ELLIOT

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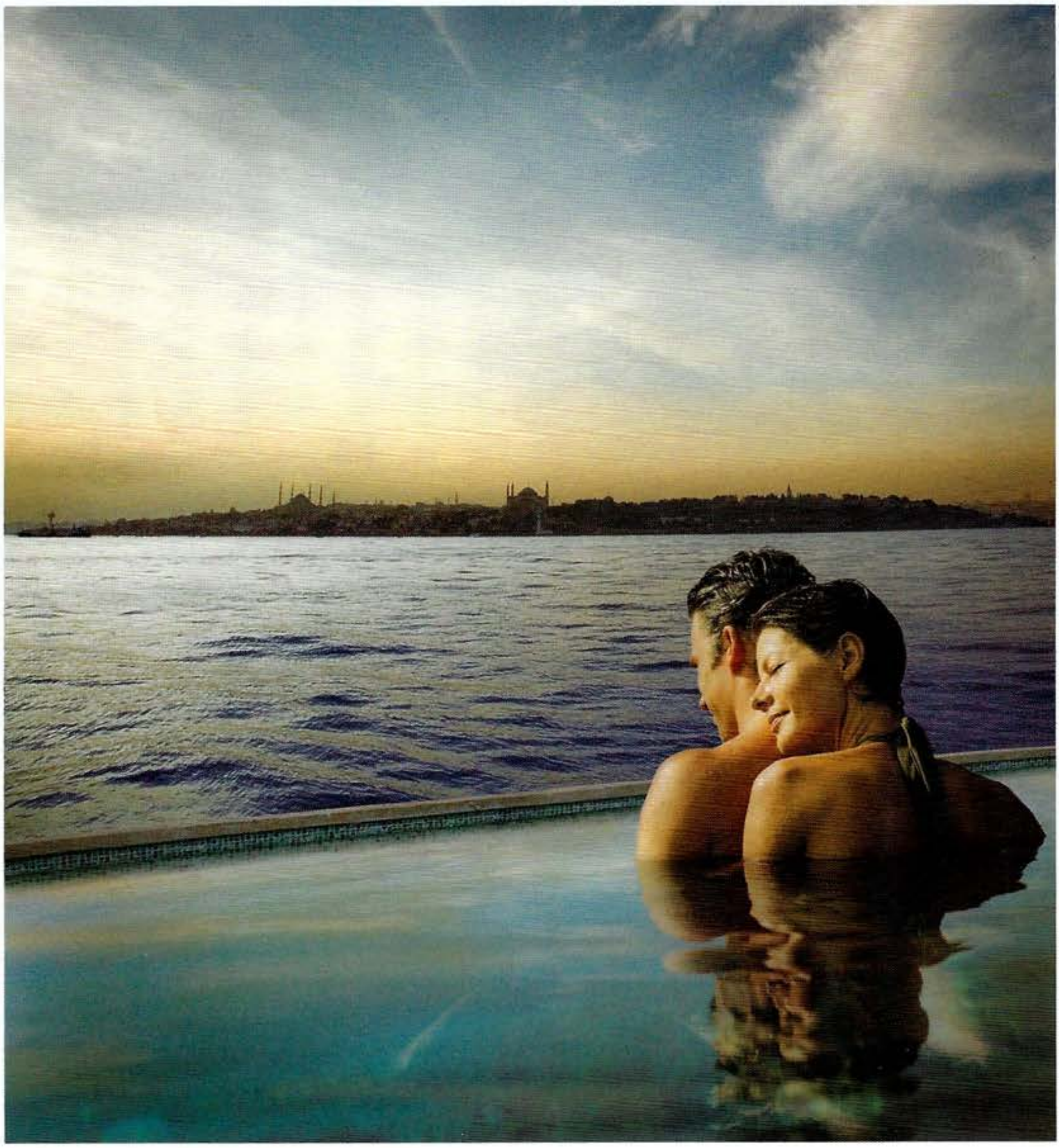

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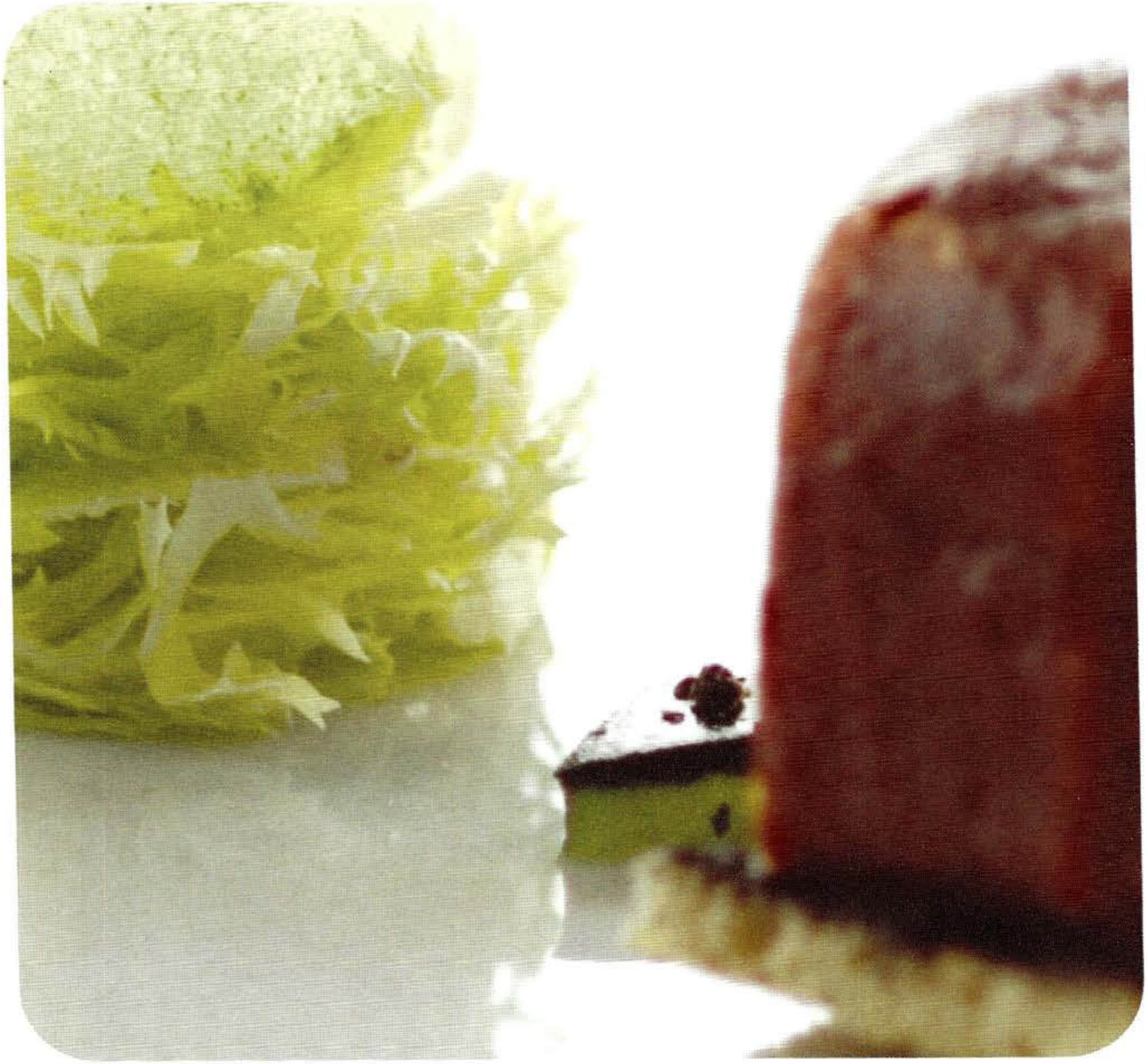

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Swissôtel The Bosphorus, Istanbul, Bayıldım Cad. No.2, 14th Floor, Maçka - Beşiktaş / Reservation: (0212) 326 1100 / 3305

CORNUCOPIA'S LUXURY HOTEL DIRECTORY

Listed online at www.cornucopia.net

ÇIRAĞAN PALACE KEMPINSKI ISTANBUL

The Çırağan offers the ultimate in luxury and elegance amid the glamour of a lovingly restored Ottoman palace. Ideally located on the Bosphorus overlooking the old city, this 5-star luxury hotel is a one-of-a-kind experience with its historical setting, luxurious facilities, award-winning cuisine and infinity pool bordering the Bosphorus. www.ciraganpalace.com.tr reservations@ciraganpalace.com.tr

Tel 90-212 326 4646 Fax 90-212 259 6687

RITZ-CARLTON, ISTANBUL

The prestigious Ritz-Carlton, in Istanbul's city centre, overlooks Dolmabahçe Palace and the Bosphorus. It has 244 rooms and suites, two restaurants, a luxurious lounge and bar, banqueting facilities for up to 600 guests, and a spa offering numerous treatments, indoor & outdoor swimming pools and gymnasium. www.ritzcarlton.com

Tel 90-212 334 4444 Fax 90-212 334 4464

THE MARMARA ISTANBUL

A deluxe five-star hotel for business and leisure travellers, located in a landmark building at the centre of the business, shopping, and entertainment districts on Taksim Square. 377 rooms including 46 The Marmara Club rooms, decorated in contemporary style with art nouveau accents and stunning views of Istanbul. www.themarmarahotels.com istanbul-info@themarmarahotels.com

Tel 90 212 251 4696 Fax 90 212 244 0509

THE MARMARA MANHATTAN

A luxury all-suite hotel serving overnight and long-term guests in New York City's most fashionable Upper East Side. The 32 floors offer panoramic views of Manhattan with 108 spacious, guest suites. The unique roof-top Penthouse suite and terrace offer an oasis of relaxation amidst the city's hustle and bustle. www.themarmarahotels.com manhattan-info@themarmarahotels.com

Tel +1 212 427 3100. Fax +1 212 427 3042

FOUR SEASONS HOTEL ISTANBUL AT THE BOSPHORUS

Experience an intimate haven at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. The Bosphorus is the backdrop for this remodelled 19th-century Ottoman palace, with its 166 guest rooms, 25 suites, chic urban spa, fine restaurants & quayside pools, all awash with the light, space and excitement of a water's-edge location. www.fourseasons.com/bosphorus

Tel 90-212 381 4000 Fax 90-212 381 4010

FOUR SEASONS HOTEL ISTANBUL AT SULTANAHMET

In the heart of the ancient city, on the doorstep of the Topkapı, Blue Mosque and Ayasofya, this award-winning hotel embodies a level of service guaranteeing it a place among the world's greats. Each of the 65 splendid, high-ceilinged rooms in this sensitively restored Turkish neoclassical bastille has its own unique character. www.fshr.com

Tel 90-212 638 8200 Fax 90-212 638 8210

SWISSOTEL GRAND EFES IZMIR

Located in Alsancak, at the heart of Izmir's commercial life, with spectacular views over the bay of Izmir. 402 elegantly designed guest rooms include 55 special suites. Superb convention centre, Amrita Spa and Wellness (a member of the Leading Spas of the World), swimming pool, tennis courts and specialist restaurants. www.izmir.swissotel.com izmir@swissotel.com

Tel 90-232 414 0000 Fax 90-232 414 1010

SHERATON HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTRE ANKARA

Luxury meets convenience in a landmark hotel: tasteful decor, ideal for business and leisure, all you'd expect of a luxury hotel plus worldclass technology. Smart lobby bar – Ankara residents' rendezvous of choice, brasserie with all-day dining & fine views; Italian cuisine at L'Angoletto. Grand wing for weddings & conventions. www.sheraton.com/ankara

Tel 90-312 457 6000 Fax 90-312 457 6100

SWISSÔTEL THE BOSPHORUS, ISTANBUL

With its palatial lobby and rooftop dining, the Swissôtel has stunning views of the Bosphorus from the chic residential and business district of Maçka, overlooking Dolmabahçe Palace. Health club, tennis courts and a swimming pool set in cedar woods, as well as a wide choice of specialist restaurants. www.swissotel.com.tr istanbul@swissotel.com

Tel 90-212 326 1100 Fax 90-212 326 1122

HYATT REGENCY ISTANBUL

Located in the heart of the city's business district, Hyatt Regency Istanbul has 360 stylish rooms including King and Deluxe King rooms, elegant suites, 71 Regency Club rooms and 7 apartments; Highly adaptable meeting and conference rooms; the pool, beautiful gardens, exceptional restaurants and spa provide wonderful diversions. www.hyatt.com

Tel 90-212 368 1234 Fax 90-212 368 1000

SHERATON CESME HOTEL, RESORT & SPA

The new Sheraton 6km from pretty Çeşme offers Californian, Mediterranean and seafood restaurants, pure white sands, and a truly life-enhancing thermal spa fed by naturally hot seawater springs. Daily tours arranged to the classical sites. Fast motorway link to Izmir's international airport (90km). sales@sheratoncesme.com www.sheratoncesme.com

Tel 90-232 723 1240 Fax 90-232 723 1856

THE MARMARA PERA

A superior four-star hotel in the historic Pera district delivering amenities for business and leisure travel alike. Spend your day enjoying the artistry of Pera, mystique of Old Istanbul and the charm of Istiklal Street. The Marmara Pera is proud to offer its guests the comfort of home with 203 rooms and suites. www.themarmarahotels.com pera-info@themarmarahotels.com

Tel 90-212 251 4646 Fax 90-212 249 8033

ANKARA HILTONSA

The Ankara Hilton, host to most state visits, is in the capital's fashionable residential area, and is ideally located for embassies, government offices, business & shopping. 315 superb rooms redesigned for business travellers (high-speed internet). 8 apart rooms (terrace, kitchenette). Wireless internet in meeting room & lobby. Acclaimed Greenhouse Restaurant & Lotus Bar. www.hilton.com

Tel 90-312 455 0000 Fax 90-312 455 0055/56

HILTON ISTANBUL

The Hilton stands in 13 acres of landscaped gardens, yet is within walking distance of the main business, shopping and entertainment districts of Maçka, Nişantaşı and Taksim. Unrivalled view, restaurants and bars, newly renovated bedrooms; outstanding meeting rooms, including the Hilton Convention & Exhibition Centre. Check availability and book online: www.istanbul.hilton.com

Tel 90-212 315 6000 Fax 90-212 240 4165

CORNUCOPIA'S LUXURY HOTEL DIRECTORY

Listed online at www.cornucopia.net

Taş Hotel – Alaçati Çeşme

A wonderful hotel in a wonderful little town that has became the showcase of rediscovered country chic. Taş Hotel is a 110-year-old stone house, whose natural, simple, unaffected style pioneered the vogue for Alaçatı. 8 rooms, refreshing swimmingpool in a perfectly peaceful lawn, superb breakfast of olives, village bread and home-made jam. www.tasotel.com; info@tasotel.com.

Tel 90-232 716 7772; fax 90-232 716 8517

Empress Zoe – Sultanahmet, Istanbul

A delightfully peaceful small hotel just a minute's walk from Ayasofya, Topkapı Palace and the Arasta Bazaar with a secret garden of cypress and palm trees next to the romantic ivy-clad ruins of a 16th-century domed hamam covered with wild delphiniums and snapdragons. Each room is airy and full of charm; many have little hamams of their own. www.emzoe.com

Tel 90-212 518 2504 Fax 90-212 518 5699

Lavanta Hotel –Yalikavak, Bodrum

Panoramic sea view, spectacular sunsets. This small, exclusive *hôtel de charme* is operated by the owners. Rooms and suites are individually decorated with antiques and valuable furnishings and have panoramic views. Set in a tranquil hillside surrounded by olive groves and fields of fragrant herbs. April 15 – Oct 16.

www.lavanta.com; lavantahotel@compuserve.de

Tel 90-252 385 2167. Fax 90-252 385 2290

Armada Hotel, Istanbul

Looking for the genuine Istanbul? Head for the Armada, in the historic Old City. Stroll to the unmissable Topkapı Palace and Ayasofya. Enjoy a drink or dinner in the magical rooftop restaurant overlooking the Blue Mosque and the Sea of Marmara. Get in tune with the rhythms of live gypsy music or traditional fasıl. www.armadahotel.com.tr

Tel 90-212 455 4455 Fax 90-212 455 4499

Atami Hotel – Bodrum

Tranquility itself, a small charming seaside hotel in Bodrum's undisturbed Paradise Bay – private beach and beautiful gardens in spectacular natural surroundings. 32 comfortable rooms, all with sea views. This family-run hotel offers friendly service, delicious Mediterranean and Japanese cuisine, and holistic holidays. Open all year. www.atamihotel.com; info@atamihotel.com

Tel: 90-252 357 7417 Fax 90-252 357 7421

The Marmara Bodrum

A member of the small luxury hotels of the world and winner of the five-star diamond award, The Marmara Bodrum is internationally recognised as among the finest, with its exceptional service for an elite clientele. Its distinctive architecture and sophisticated residential design is reflected in its 96 deluxe rooms and suites. www.themarmarahotels.com bodrum-info@themarmarahotels.com

Tel 90-252 313 8130 Fax 90-252 313 8131

Elkep Evi Cave House, Cappadocia

Elkep Evi is a complex of three 7-room bed & breakfast pensions plus a 2-bedroom suite clustered together and managed jointly to maintain the intimacy of a small hotel. It offers cave rooms with modern facilities and private hamams, ideally located near the top of Esbelli, above the town of Ürgüp. Recommended by *The Little Hotel Book 2007*.

www.elkepevi.com info@elkepevi.com

Tel 90-384 341 6000 Fax 90-384 341 8080

Kempinski Residences Astoria

Contemporary luxury combined with Kempinski style and service in Esentepe, Istanbul's modern business district. Spacious, fully serviced, kitchenette-equipped suites available for daily or long-term stays. Instant elevator access to 20 restaurants, wellness centre & spa and carpark in one of the city's smartest shopping centres.

www.kempinski-astoria.com

Tel 90-212 370 00 00. Fax 90-212 370 00 70

Mehmet Ali Ağa Mansion – Datça

Member of Relais et Chateax, this is a unique museum hotel set in the almond, olive and lemon groves on the Datça peninsula. The Ottoman konak was built in 1809, its frescoes lovingly restored. Swimming pool, private beach, 18 rooms in a choice of modern or traditional style. The hotel's Elaki Restautant is famed for its wine cellar and regional cuisine. www.kocaev.com; info@kocaev.com

Tel 90-252 712 9257; fax 90-252 712 9256

The Marmara Antalya

First and only revolving hotel in the world, The Marmara Antalya, sits atop the Falez hills of Antalya on the Turquiose Coast. The revolving loft has 24 The Marmara Club rooms, the 15-floor main building 208 guest rooms; dining & leisure activities in the nnovative Marmara Tuti lobby area. info@themarmarahotels.com

www.themarmarahotels.com antalya

Tel 90 242 249 3600 Fax 90 212 292 3318

Queen Ada Hotel – Torba, Bodrum

Nothing comes between you and the ideal Mediterranean holiday in this hotel set in beautiful gardens with its own beach and private jetty in pretty Torba Bay. 22 luxurious rooms and a spacious suite, all air-conditioned, offer a charm impossible to find in large 5-star hotels. Bodrum: 10 mins. Bodrum Airport: 30 mins.

www.queenadahotel.com.tr info@queenadahotel.com.tr

Tel 90-252 367 1598pbx. Fax 90-252 367 1614

The Radisson SAS Bosphorus

Ideal for business and leisure travellers, this new hotel in Ortaköy on the shore of the Bosphorus, is perfect for the city's liveliest dining and night life. 120 rooms blend elegance and comfort in contemporary style. Restaurant, bar, terrace, fitness and beauty centre. Free wireless internet. Meeting rooms for 5 to 120.

radissonsas.com info.bosphorus.istanbul@radissonsas.com

Tel 90-212 310 1500 Fax 90-212 310 1540

Sumahan on the Water
Istanbul

Located in an historic setting on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus, a small special hotel tucked into its own waterfront property. All 7 rooms & 13 suites offer spectacular old-city views. Private launch service across the Bosphorus. Intimate, elegant, modern and oh so comfortable! Waterfront Terrace Restaurant serving Turkish & international cuisine. Sumahan Wellness (hamam, massage, fitness). Airport 35kms. sumahan.com; info@sumahan.com

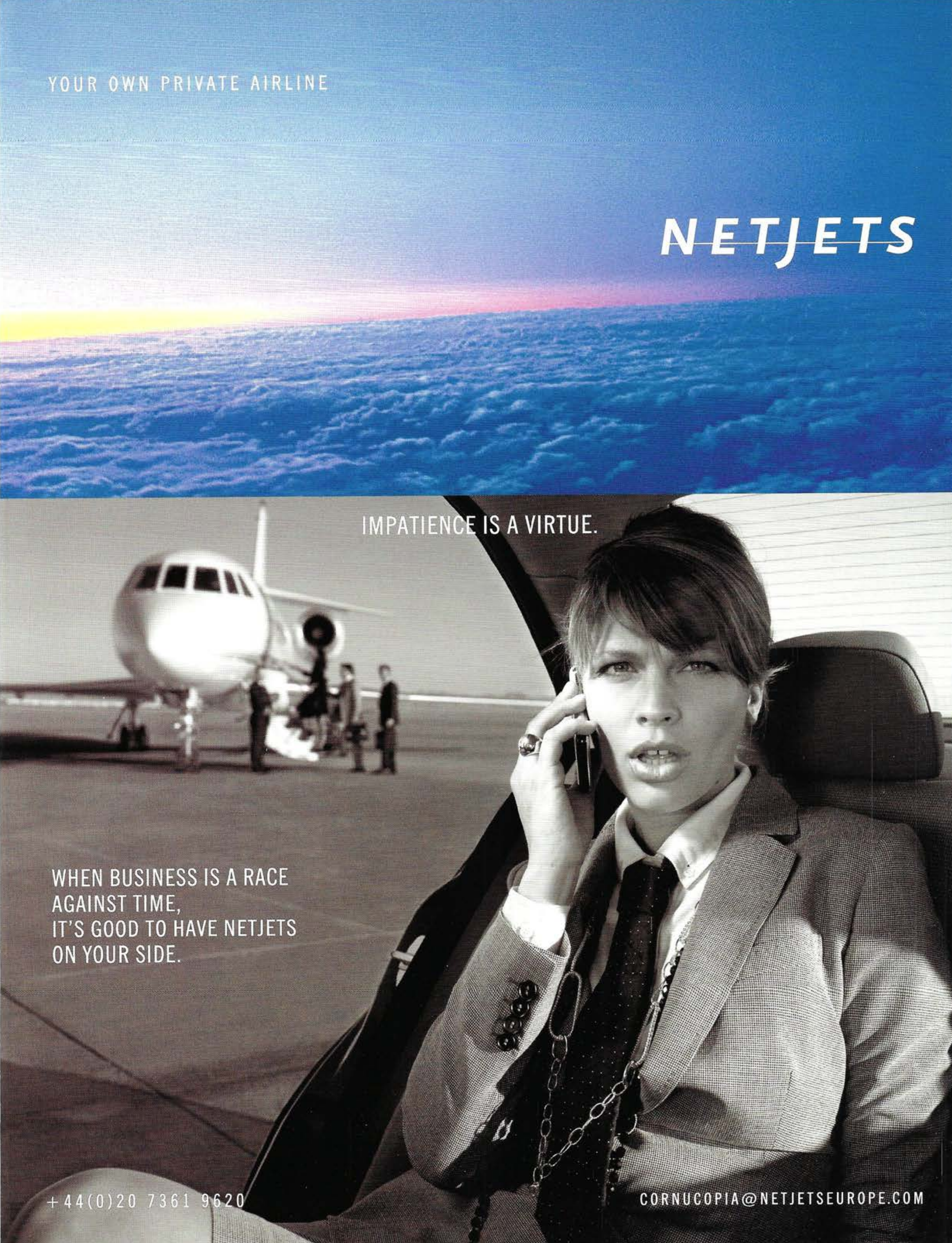
Tel 90-216 422 8000 Fax 90-216 422 8008

Park Hyatt Istanbul
Maçka Palas

The brand new stylish Park Hyatt Istanbul – Maçka Palas, located in the fashionable Nişantaşı district, houses 90 uniquely designed rooms, including 10 elegant suites, 25 residential spa rooms along with a lounge featuring all-day dining, a grill restaurant and a multi-level terrace with pool and bar

istanbul.park.hyatt.com

Tel 90-212 315 1234 Fax 90-212 315 1235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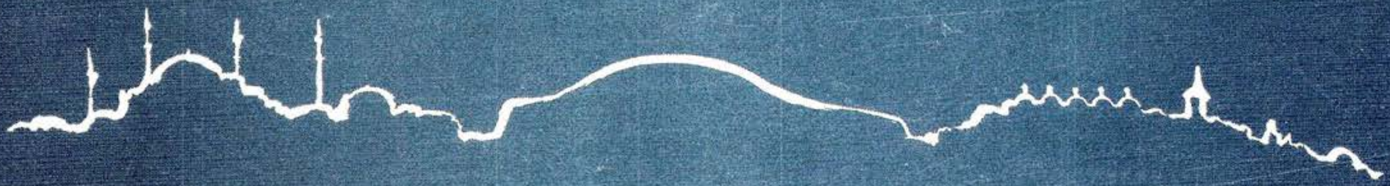
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